



FIRST SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

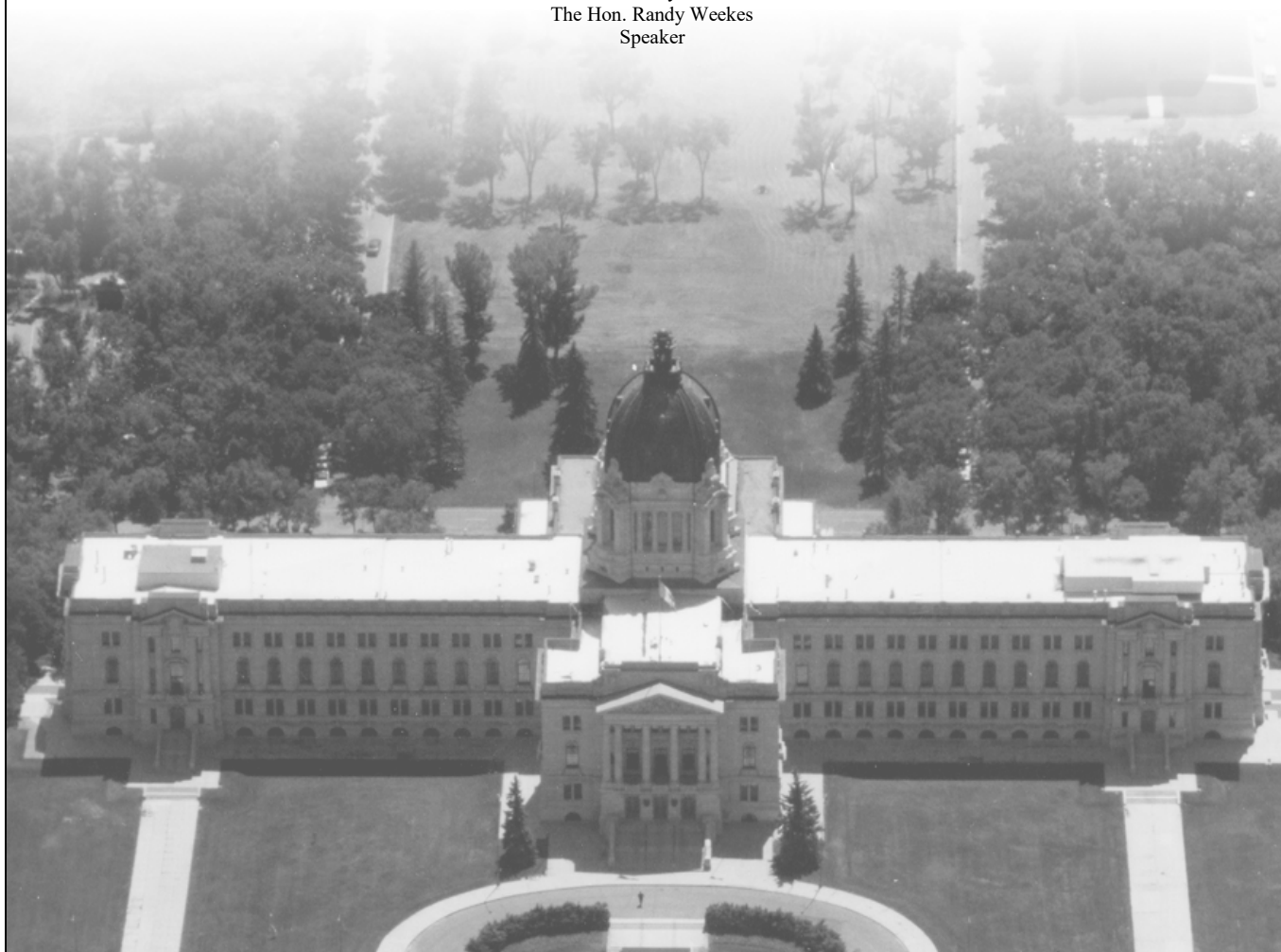
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)

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authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
1st 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 — Ryan Meili

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Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)
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Meili, Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)
Meyers, Derek — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)
Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
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Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)
Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 13

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Deputy Clerk — Iris Lang

Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyk

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise this morning to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan calling for pay equity legislation. A number of people have been paying attention to this petition and have been signing all across the province. They want to draw our attention to a few points: that Saskatchewan is one of only four provinces that does not have pay equity legislation, and that Saskatchewan has one of the highest gender-wage gaps in Canada, which is the result of systemic gender discrimination and compensation for work that must be corrected with pay equity legislation.

The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission has recommended proactive and comprehensive pay equity legislation, which to date has not been pursued by this Sask Party government. While *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* prohibits gender-based compensation discrimination, the complaint-driven process puts no positive obligation on employers. And that while pay equity advocacy primarily seeks to address gender-based wage discrimination, it must also be mindful of ability-, age-, identity-, and race-based wage discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, 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 introduce pay equity legislation.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition today reside in Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Martensville Restaurant Owner Recognized for Fundraising

Mr. Jensen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's vital for kids of all ages to be involved in sports and recreational activities. It fosters personal growth and gives the kids a sense of achievement.

Mr. Speaker, in my constituency of Martensville-Warman, Brian Buffin and his A&W restaurant family, along with many volunteers and sponsors, have shown the values of teamwork and community leadership by raising much-needed money for KidSport.

They've initiated a raffle to raise this money every year from

2016 to 2019. A fully finished, ready-to-move kids' playhouse was built by local high school students. In that time, this initiative has raised over \$43,500 for KidSport in both Martensville and Warman. This fundraiser has enabled less-fortunate kids to grow and achieve by helping cover registration and equipment costs so that they can participate in organized sports and recreation programs.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report that after last year's cancellation, tickets for this year's raffle will go on sale soon. I should also note that because of their fundraising efforts, the Buffin family were recently presented with a Community Champion Award, only one of 12 awarded by A&W Canada annually across the country and the only one in Saskatchewan this year.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of the Assembly to join me in congratulating Brian and his family on winning this award and making a positive difference for everyone in their community. Thank you.

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

Sikh Heritage Month

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to wish a happy Vaisakhi and Sikh Heritage Month to all those celebrating. I was honoured to have the opportunity to attend the flag raisings at city hall as well as at the legislature, along with the Leader of the Opposition and many colleagues. My colleagues and I are disappointed, due to COVID, to not be able to join together with the thousands, proudly and loudly through the streets of Regina, for Nagar Kirtan and the Sikh Day parade, but are very thankful for all the Sikh community is doing to stay safe. And we look so forward to next year's celebration.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to celebrate Sikh values — values of humanity, generosity, and equality. These values have been put into action and on full display throughout this pandemic, with no better example than the Guru Nanak Free Kitchen, serving hundreds of meals to those in need, weekly.

This is a powerful expression of our provincial motto, "from many peoples, strength." By treating each other with respect and dignity, and lifting people up at every opportunity, we can make Saskatchewan a more just, inclusive, and welcoming province for everyone. Saskatchewan's Sikh community has enriched our province through their generosity, and serve as a constant reminder that we are to love all, to help all, and to do so peacefully.

I call on all members to join with me in recognizing Sikh Heritage Month and offer our thanks and our respect.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

New Legislation to Regulate the Massage Therapy Profession

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand in the House today to mark the second reading of *The*

Massage Therapy Act. Mr. Speaker, this legislation was first introduced by our government in December 2020 and has received broad support from Saskatchewan's 1,600 massage therapists and the associations to which they belong.

The Massage Therapy Act will allow the creation of a new Saskatchewan College of Massage Therapists. Similar to other professions and regulators such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons, massage therapists will have competency and practice standards, a code of ethics, and a process for misconduct. Mr. Speaker, the Act will help protect the public from potential harm from incompetent or unethical practitioners.

This Act has the endorsement of three key organizations: the Massage Therapist Association of Saskatchewan, the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada, and the Canadian Massage & Manual Osteopathic Therapists Association. They worked together to help bring this to fruition and we thank them for that, along with the many individual massage therapists who provided their perspectives.

Mr. Speaker, regulating this profession will benefit practitioners and is an important step to help ensure that the services Saskatchewan people receive are safe and appropriate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognizing Medical Lab Workers

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to share a story of Carla Saworski, a health care provider whose work is invaluable to our province. Carla has been a full-time medical lab tech at St. Paul's for 25 years. Her work with the department of hematology plays a crucial role in helping a diverse group of patients every day.

Under ordinary circumstances this work keeps Carla and her team incredibly busy, and as I'm sure you can imagine, the pandemic has increased that workload substantially. For Carla and all medical lab assistants and phlebotomists, regular work has not paused, but they are now also tasked with managing the day-to-day processing of COVID samples.

This last year has been taxing on the workers and the provincial lab system. This additional pressure is only growing and is causing Carla's team members to leave the workforce. Carla does not blame her former colleagues; she understands the anxiety and burnout. When staffing levels are short, she and others do their best to cover all needs, but it is impossible on many days.

Where would we be without the dedicated, compassionate, and hard-working lab team amid this pandemic? I ask that all members join me in acknowledging Carla and all other front-line health care workers for their commitment to keeping all of us safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Radio Hosts Conclude Careers with Final Radiothon

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For over three

decades, the people of Regina and area have woke up to some familiar voices. CC and Lorie have brought smiles to faces, shared stories, and played the hits over the airwaves on Z99.

As the duo gets set to sign off for good and head into retirement, they had one more important show to do, a show they've been doing for 34 years and not even a COVID pandemic could stop them: the Z99 radiothon for the neonatal intensive care unit at the Regina General Hospital.

Now there's likely very few people in southern Saskatchewan that don't know someone who has made use of this wonderful facility. We've got a ton of parents in here and some new parents. In fact my nephew Lincoln had to spend time in the NICU [neonatal intensive care unit], as my brother put it, learning to breathe. Well I'm proud to say that Lincoln is now in elementary school and the problem isn't breathing; it's keeping him from going 110 miles an hour non-stop.

Yesterday marked the final radiothon to be hosted by CC and Lorie, and they raised a one-day total of nearly \$417,000. And they went well over the \$10 million mark in their 34-year history of running this radiothon. Mr. Speaker, I now ask all members to please join me in congratulating CC and Lorie on successful careers and the long-lasting impact they've had on families in our city and our province in the past, in the present, and in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Economic Indicators Show Saskatchewan's Success

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The good news about Saskatchewan's economy continues to roll in. Yesterday the Statistics Canada report on manufacturing sales for the month of February was released. Between last February and this February, Saskatchewan sales were up 7.6 per cent to 1.33 billion, the third-highest increase amongst the provinces. During this time period, while sales in Saskatchewan saw an increase, the national average was negative 0.8 per cent.

This morning Statistics Canada released another report, this one on wholesale trade for the month of February. Again, between last February and this February, the value of wholesale trade in Saskatchewan increased by 25.3 per cent to 2.55 billion, the highest increase amongst all provinces. The national average during the time period was only 6.5 per cent.

On top of these great new numbers, we've also seen recently strong numbers in exports, investments in building construction, and building permits. The members opposite have spent the entire season running down our economy and talking about how bad things are in this province. The good news is, Mr. Speaker, that the real numbers are a very different story.

Saskatchewan continues to lead our national economic recovery. Saskatchewan people and businesses are hard at work driving this recovery. And this is something — at least on the government side of the House — is something we are very proud of. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Arm River.

New Democratic Party's Record

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have now come up with a new strategy to defend their party's abysmal record when they governed this province. And what's that strategy? "It wasn't me." And while we've enjoyed their throwback pics from the '90s, it's concerning that they think closing 176 schools and 52 hospitals and the worst jobs record in the country is a laughing matter.

There are many people in this province, Mr. Speaker, who remember the '90s as a dark time in the province's history. Chronic population loss. Cuts to critical services. Tax revolts. And an NDP [New Democratic Party] government who thought its only job was to manage decline. And their response, Mr. Speaker? Well that was the old NDP; we were just kids.

But does the new face of the NDP look that different from the old NDP, Mr. Speaker? They continue to advocate for more spending with no way to pay for it. They support tax hikes and damaging policies like the federally imposed carbon tax. They are calling for widespread lockdowns which would put thousands of people out of work and close small businesses across the province.

If they don't want to be compared to the old NDP then they need to drop the same job-killing policies their party has been hanging on to since the 1990s. There may be new faces on the other side, Mr. Speaker, but it's the same old NDP. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Mr. Meili: — Well we discovered the Saskatchewan Party members are still so committed to protecting the Devine record. Mr. Speaker, we keep hearing two stories in this pandemic, two stories that are very different: what the Premier and his Health minister tell the public, and what the Saskatchewan Health Authority tells the doctors working on the front line.

Last night at committee the Health minister tried to tell us that everything's fine in the province's ICUs [intensive care unit] at the very same time, at the very same time doctors in this province were told that we have the highest rate of ICU admissions in the entire country. The highest rate in the entire country, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier tell the legislature who's telling the truth: the minister or the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority]?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, throughout, over the course of the last 13, maybe 14 months, we've always said from the outset that we are going to ensure that we're working with public health, working with the people of this province, so that we can preserve the health care capacity that we have here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We have done that.

We have made decisions throughout our response to this pandemic in Saskatchewan. Many of those decisions have, yes, been increasing public health measures in a number of areas across the province and the province proper, Mr. Speaker. A

number of those decisions that we have made as well, is to ensure that we are working with our Saskatchewan Health Authority as well as other partners, so that we can ensure that we're going to provide those vaccines to Saskatchewan people in as quick and as short and in as expedient a fashion as we possibly can.

[10:15]

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, as we look to the weeks and months ahead, vaccinations are our way through this pandemic. I had mine yesterday and was very appreciative of all of the folks over in Regina here that are delivering vaccines to all of those that are lined up outside, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to continue to focus on finding our path out of this pandemic, Mr. Speaker, and that most certainly runs through one of those vaccination centres.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I'll tell you the truth. We are leading the country in ICU admissions. I just came, I just came from the ICU at Regina General where they're already double bunking patients. They're already double bunking patients, something they've never seen before. One nurse said to me, and I quote — and the Health minister should hear this — she said, "It's like a nightmare we can't wake up from." This is this Premier's version of protecting the health care system.

In that same presentation last night, doctors heard that the acute care system is, and I quote, "in crisis," that at the current trajectory, the system will be overrun, that our ICUs are over capacity, that we have younger and sicker patients, and that they will be unable to take care of other illnesses.

This is the truth. Things are not fine, Mr. Speaker, and vaccines are not enough. God, I wish they were. Oh, I wish they were. They would have been enough if this Premier would have acted. If this Premier had taken any responsibility and taken the tough decisions early instead of constantly being three steps behind, constantly too little too late, those vaccines would have been enough. Instead we're losing the race and badly. Will the Premier and the minister do the very bare minimum and be honest about the realities faced in our health care system right now?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with the introduction of variants, in particular in Regina with the higher concentration of variants in Regina, that's why this government took action. And we know we introduced a number of measures in Regina a number of weeks ago now, Mr. Speaker, to address the increased concentration of variants that we have here. That is to preserve and to ensure that we can continue to have the health care capacity, the provincial health care capacity to care for those folks that may not only have COVID, but all those folks that need to use our health care facilities for whatever that reason may be throughout this.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, is that there has been modelling throughout this pandemic, modelling that does not predict the future but does show some of the potential outcomes. We've seen that in other provinces and we've seen it in

Saskatchewan. You've always also seen governments use the tools that they have at their disposal to ensure that those worst outcomes just don't occur. And we've seen that as well across this nation, Mr. Speaker, where those most drastic outcomes or the catastrophic outcomes have not occurred, in Saskatchewan for sure, and that's because this government has taken action.

One of those tools to date is to provide vaccinations to Saskatchewan residents. We're doing it. We're leading the nation. We're going to continue to lead the nation in the weeks ahead.

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

Mr. Meili: — Same thing over and over again, Mr. Speaker — a complete failure to acknowledge the reality of what front-line health care workers are facing today. This is the current trajectory, Mr. Speaker. This is the path we're on under this Premier's actions right now.

This Premier waited too long, waited too long to increase restrictions in Regina when he saw variant cases spiking, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well, if it's wrong, why does the SHA keep telling the doctors that?

When we saw the variants continue to spread around the other provinces, instead of learning the lesson from Regina, he continues to wait. He continues to insist on being too little too late as we see cases spike — I know they don't want to hear this — but we see cases spike in every corner of the province, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Premier explain to me this? Why can you not have one other family you can connect with, support each other, but you can go see that same family in a bar, in a restaurant, interact with the speaker and the cook and every other customer, spread the virus? How does that make sense? Why does this Premier keep choosing measures that make our lives harder but don't keep us safe?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we have significant measures in place across this province, more significant measures in place here in Regina. And more significant measures were introduced across the province just a short while ago around those households. And we are continuing to monitor where any outbreaks are, and quite often, and virtually all of the time when we do see outbreaks, they are in a situation where the public health measures were not adhered to, Mr. Speaker.

And this is . . . Quite frankly the questions that are coming into MLAs' [Member of the Legislative Assembly] offices over the course of the last number of weeks is, you know, how are we going to find our way through this? Why are we continuing to follow these public health measures if there is no returning to normal or no end in sight? Why is the Premier coming out and asking everyone to go and get their vaccinations when there doesn't seem to be an end in sight?

Well, Mr. Speaker, we need to, yes, continue down the road with the significant health measures that we have in place; yes, continue down the road of ensuring that we are making every

vaccine available to Saskatchewan people. And our front-line health care workers are doing that, Mr. Speaker. But we also need to, in the weeks ahead, start to have a conversation about what that is going to achieve for this province in the weeks, the months ahead as well, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand people's frustrations. Measures that have gone on for months and months because this Premier refused to act quickly, refused to act in a way that would actually get things under control.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's response to the third wave, the Premier's response to the third wave is like watching a slow-motion car crash. You can see the devastation and the carnage coming in the distance, but he refuses to change course, Mr. Speaker, downplaying the risk of variants, half measures that are ineffective, teachers not vaccinated, not enough health care staff, no rapid testing.

Every day, every step of the way, this Premier has failed this province with his weak, ineffective leadership. Every day, Mr. Speaker, every day. But every day is also an opportunity for us to do better. We can do better. Will this Premier keep ignoring the signs? Or will he finally take action today, give people some hope that he will actually get the third wave under control?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as we encountered the variants, most notably in Regina — but as I've always said, they will eventually spread across the province of Saskatchewan — we have acted. We increased the measures in Regina. We now have increased the measures across this province. Mr. Speaker, we have doubled down on our efforts to ensure that we're providing those vaccines to people across the province in opening up drive . . . First of all, prioritizing vaccines into the city of Regina where the variants were concentrated; second of all, opening up drive-through clinics in other communities across this province.

Mr. Speaker, this is what I would tell the people of this province: not only are we going to find our way through this third wave, we are, in the weeks and months ahead, going to find our way back to what is a normal life in this province.

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

Health Care Workers and Vaccination Rollout

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, at the same time this Premier pats himself on the back for vaccines, health care workers are risking their lives to provide care because they have been left out of this government's vaccine plan. Can the minister explain how it is that front-line health care workers providing direct care to patients in Saskatoon are being left out of the vaccine rollout?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I remind the members opposite the first people that got done in this province were two health care workers over at the Regina

General in December, Mr. Speaker. And we've continued to be able to do that: offer those vaccines to health care workers.

Mr. Speaker, there was a group that was identified in phase 1 that we went after very aggressively to make sure that they were safe. Those are the ones that were in the COVID ward and also the people that were working in our long-term care facilities. Mr. Speaker, we have always prioritized health care workers. We also added in an additional 10,000 health care workers.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say that again we are at the age of 48 across the province. If there are health care workers out there that need to get vaccinated, they should be in line right now or booking their appointment, to make sure that they're helping out all of us get vaccinated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Well these individuals weren't offered a place in the line, Mr. Speaker. And apparently it's because they don't work for the SHA. Despite providing direct clinical care to patients, staff at the Saskatoon Community Clinic are not being offered priority vaccines because they're non-SHA health workers.

The clinic's doctors, who were initially left out, wrote to the minister this week, calling on the province to follow the NACI [National Advisory Committee on Immunization] guidelines and include clinical staff who work directly with at-risk patients. Can the minister explain how it makes any sense to decide which health care workers will get their vaccines based on who's cutting the cheques?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Health minister.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people that were identified within the health care system, whether they work for the SHA or not, were identified by people that have more expertise in the health care system than I do, Mr. Speaker. That information was brought to me. They said, these are the groups we need to prioritize and they were prioritized, Mr. Speaker.

I understand that there is a letter coming from . . . or that a letter that was from the Saskatoon Community Clinic. Mr. Speaker, we're going to look in to make sure that we can get them on our priority list and make sure that they're vaccinated right away, Mr. Speaker.

But again I will continue to tell the members opposite who say that this is a haphazard system, we are leading the country, Mr. Speaker. Again and again, they don't understand it. There are 13 people in this province that don't understand the vaccination system, Mr. Speaker, and they're sitting all right over there.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the minister can't just shirk responsibility on this one. At this point I don't even know if he's read the NACI guidelines.

The Saskatoon Community Clinic serves more than 15,000 people in the city. Unlike many clinics, they stayed open, serving the community throughout the pandemic. And as the more than 20 doctors who wrote to the minister this week said, nursing and diagnostic staff, physical therapists, and others who have been left out spend more time and have more direct contact with patients than they do.

COVID-19 doesn't distinguish between health workers who work for the SHA and those who work for our partner organizations. Saskatoon cases are skyrocketing, and these workers are at great risk. Will the minister do the right thing and commit today to including non-SHA health workers in the vaccine rollout?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to make sure that it's on the record that nobody's going to be left out of the vaccination process. We have an age-based sequence that we have complemented with targeted, through our mobile clinics . . . like long-term care facilities, like other clinics, congregate living, shelters. We've also working our way through group homes to be able to make sure that we can vaccinate people that have challenges to get to the drive-through or book an appointment. We're continuing to do this again and again, Mr. Speaker.

But what I can say is there are some people that are outside the SHA system that have been identified to me, Mr. Speaker. We'll certainly look at this to see if we have a vaccine supply that we can get over and they can vaccinate their staff right away, Mr. Speaker. But again — I can't emphasize this enough — we need everybody to be able to get in and get vaccinated as soon as they possibly can.

I want to thank the doctors at that clinic, the doctors, nurses, and the health care providers across our province that are doing a yeoman's work to be able to make sure that we are keeping people safe, we're keeping our hospital system running at the best capacity that we possibly can, and most importantly that they're getting those vaccine shots into people's arms. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Support for Education during COVID-19 Pandemic

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I brought to the minister's attention a motion from the Regina Catholic School Board. The board is offering to assist in any way if the government would just agree to get school staff vaccinated. The minister said, “. . . we certainly do have a plan . . . [to work] with . . . school divisions.”

Well, Mr. Speaker, every day another school board is taking action, contacting the minister, passing motions that reveal he certainly does not have a plan. Yesterday another letter to the ministers of Health and Education, this time from the Chair of the board of Regina Public Schools. I've seen the letter, and it says that in-class learning is, quote, simply not safe and that no amount of PPE [personal protective equipment] or cleaning can

match the safety and peace of mind of a vaccine.

What is the minister going to do to address these concerns? And when will he make sure that school staff can get their vaccine?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday and as I said to the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] spring assembly last night, in the city of Regina today, 25 per cent of education staff can be vaccinated — not book an appointment to be vaccinated; they can be vaccinated today.

Sixty per cent of education staff in the city of Regina will likely be eligible for the drive-throughs within a week, perhaps less than a week, Mr. Speaker. That's 60 per cent of our teachers and other education staff in this city in the next week will be eligible, not to book an appointment but to actually get vaccinated. That's because based on the plan that has been put in place, Mr. Speaker, the SHA is rapidly rolling through the vaccination list based on age. And that certainly is going to be the case across the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is no evidence of large chain transmission within our school systems. That's because of the high degree of compliance with our safe restart plan for schools, Mr. Speaker. And that's because of the plans that have been put in place by the government and by the school divisions to keep our teachers, our education staff, and our students safe.

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

Ms. Beck: — I guess these school divisions have it wrong then, Mr. Speaker.

[10:30]

The minister got up again yesterday and now again today to rattle off the Premier's lines promising when school staff will be inoculated through the status quo rollout. Hurry up and wait simply doesn't cut it. Yet another school board yesterday sounding the alarm about yet another issue — rapid testing. Saskatoon Catholic is stuck looking at thousands of rapid tests, with no way of using them: "We simply do not have the capacity."

No wonder when asked about consent forms required for rapid testing yesterday, the minister could only say that they were being worked on a couple of weeks ago. Time is of the essence. Every passing day, every bus ride, every class change is another opportunity for the spread of this virus.

A couple of weeks simply is not a reasonable time frame. When will the Sask Party start working in real time and get rapid testing up and going in our schools?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would note because of the age-based plan that's been put in place by the SHA, I'm pleased to see that the member opposite who

just asked the question has been vaccinated, and I'm looking forward to getting my vaccination sometime next week, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the member is right. In March 100,000 rapid tests were delivered to school divisions across the province. Mr. Speaker, permission forms were completed by the ministry and sent out to school divisions on March 31st. In fact one school has already used rapid tests for about 50 students when school began earlier this week.

Mr. Speaker, there are three successful vendors that have been pre-qualified through the RFPQ [request for pre-qualifications], and I would encourage all school divisions that are interested in delivering the rapid tests to contact the ministry, and we will set them up with one of the vendors. Thank you.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, 50 students and an RFP [request for proposal] process that closes at the end of this month. The tests might be rapid, but this minister certainly is not rapid in his response. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I almost feel bad for this minister because it really cannot be fun to be failing the education sector on so many fronts.

The letter from the Regina Public School Board says that accelerating vaccines for school staff would help with school return to in-class learning: "This would also allow many school families in Regina and area to get back to work and to continue to support the economy."

Well, Mr. Speaker, he's not wrong. Having safe, open schools are not just good for mental health and for education outcomes, but it makes good economic sense too. Does the minister understand what is at stake? Is this a priority or isn't it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just urge the member to actually look at the RFPQ, Mr. Speaker. While it does have an end date on it, it is an open RFPQ. That means that any company that meets the criteria in the RFPQ can be added at any time, not waiting for the RFPQ tender date to actually close. That's why we already have three companies that have been pre-qualified through the RFPQ. If school divisions are interested in working with them, we can connect them with one of those three companies, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's those companies that will provide the capacity to provide the test. That's why we did an RFPQ. That's why we're securing third-party vendors. Mr. Speaker, absolutely this is a priority for the government to ensure that teachers and students and staff are safe. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that 80 per cent of schools are open in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Management of Provincial Economy

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, not only are Saskatchewan

people sick of the Sask Party failing students, they're sick of them failing workers in this province. They're sick of that failing jobs minister, and they're sick of this failing government when it comes to our economy. That minister failed to come up with a jobs plan in this budget. Meanwhile, we have the worst jobs numbers in the country.

Bars, restaurants, and hotels all over the province have been devastated by COVID-19 and devastated by the Sask Party slamming them with the imposition of the PST [provincial sales tax]. Simple question to the minister: why won't they take this damaging tax off restaurant meals to help our struggling restaurant industry get through this challenging time and to support workers in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have some outstanding news to report to the House today. We had, yesterday, some outstanding manufacturing numbers, showing an 8 per cent increase in manufacturing sales year over year, third best in the country, Mr. Speaker.

Today even better numbers. Wholesale trade, which is a really significant and important leading indicator, remarkable 25 per cent increase over the course of the last year, Mr. Speaker, due to the hard work, ingenuity of our people here in this province. And also because the other guys haven't had a chance to lock them all down, which the Leader of the Opposition, I actually note, refuses to say in this Chamber. He might say it outside, but he won't actually say it in here.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday my colleague the Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds introduced into this House a document which the New Democrats desperately did not want the public of this province to know about that goes to the very heart of their hypocrisy on jobs, Mr. Speaker. In the limited areas where they have an opportunity to lead by example — they hire their campaign staff; they hire their party staff — what did they do when they had that opportunity? Fully 33 per cent of every single dollar they spent during the campaign, Mr. Speaker, where did it go? Outside of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Let's be clear here. That minister and that government has the worst jobs record in Canada this year, Mr. Speaker. The best month for restaurants in Saskatchewan was February 2017. That was the month before they were slammed with the new PST imposed upon them, devastating that industry, and they've never recovered. So many of those small businesses are in the red and hurting in a big way and won't see any benefit from this government's time-limited rate change that they've brought forward in this budget. It won't offer one thin dime.

Removing the PST from restaurant meals would go a long way to help keep the doors of so many of these small businesses from closing for good. Why won't the Sask Party do the right thing and remove this damaging tax?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export

Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have a great deal of empathy and have worked very closely with the restaurant sector, who are struggling. And that's why we've provided more support for that industry than any other province in Canada, Mr. Speaker. In addition to that, yesterday we introduced a bill that will see the extension of a cap on delivery fees past the end of the summer, Mr. Speaker.

But again, the hypocrisy of the members opposite is stunning. They stand up and say, well you know, restaurants are struggling, Mr. Speaker. And what is their actual policy? That they should all be shut down. That's actually what they're proposing every day, standing up, demanding they be shut down.

So the hypocrisy does not end though with their approach to the economy. It goes further than that, Mr. Speaker. And the fact that they would have spent 33 cents of every dollar to those who reside out of province during the campaign speaks to that.

Not only this, Mr. Speaker, their professed concern about variant spread and all the rest of it, where do these people come from? They flew them in from around the country: Vancouver, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg. Mr. Speaker, that's what they did during the campaign. The Leader of the Opposition, where does his campaign manager come? Winnipeg. The member from Regina University, where did hers come from? Vancouver. She had another staffer from Edmonton. Douglas Park, where? Edmonton. Eastview, where? Toronto and Winnipeg. Mr. Speaker, their hypocrisy knows no bounds.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — What a bunch of deflection, Mr. Speaker, when Saskatchewan people are living a hard reality due to the choices of that government. My campaign manager came from Regina Rosemont, Mr. Speaker, for the record.

This out-of-touch government isn't doing . . . [inaudible] . . . to create jobs. That's why we're dead last. Twenty-three thousand fewer people working each and every day and thousands more fleeing the province, never to return, leaving Saskatchewan. This Sask Party government has driven our province into decline, and they have no plan to drive us out. From restaurants to construction to film to the solar industries, the only thing this government does is drive people away and jobs out of this province.

Why won't this government finally do the right thing, admit their mistake, and reverse this damaging tax on our restaurant industry?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think I've already pointed out their massive hypocrisy on the restaurant industry, but I am actually surprised that the member would bring up population growth, Mr. Speaker, because the record of this government for population growth is one that is unmatched in the history of this province.

Mr. Speaker, 170,000 newcomers to Saskatchewan over the course of the last 14 years. Contrast that with those members opposite's record on population growth, which was negative during their time in government — 16 years where young people had to leave Saskatchewan to find opportunity. That is going to be one of the most significant changes that this province will be remembered for over the course of the last 15 years.

I'm glad to hear as well the member for Rosemont hired his campaign manager . . . or a volunteer, I think actually, campaign manager from Rosemont. That's a good thing. And he's giving me a thumbs-up. So that's great. He should talk to his colleagues though because there were how many campaign managers from out of province? Out of their 61 candidates, 18, Mr. Speaker, 18 came from outside of Saskatchewan. So apparently they couldn't find local volunteers or even local staff to work on those campaigns. Mr. Speaker, 18 they flew in; elected 13 members. I guess it didn't work very good.

The Speaker: — Why is the Premier on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I'd ask leave to make a motion for an address to Her Majesty the Queen.

The Speaker: — The Premier has requested leave to move a motion for a humble address. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the Premier.

MOTIONS

Passing of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you to members of the House for leave. I rise to move that a humble address be presented to Her Majesty on the occasion of the death of His Royal Highness Prince Philip. Mr. Speaker, in the week since his passing, people around the world have shared their memories of the Prince. There has been an extraordinary outpouring of affection.

In Saskatchewan we have been reminded of what a remarkable and active life Prince Philip lived and how his singular life intersected with ours in so many ways, from fighting alongside Saskatchewan soldiers during the invasion of Sicily nearly 80 years ago to providing a critical boost to Operation Burrowing Owl, a conservation program that was launched in the 1980s. Mr. Speaker, Prince Philip was a good and loyal friend to the province of Saskatchewan.

There have been wonderful tributes to His Royal Highness in the last few days, many of them from hundreds of organizations that he was affiliated with as a supporter, as a patron, as a member. One club honoured the Prince with these words, and I quote:

He inspired us with his unbending spirit; original judgement unclouded by the changing conventions; love for life; unfailing loyalty to his country, its people, and his family. He was a true knight of our hearts and a shining example to

so many.

Mr. Speaker, be it resolved:

That a humble address be presented to Her Majesty the Queen in the following words:

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY:

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN QUEEN OF CANADA:

We the members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in session assembled, respectfully tender our deep sympathy for the loss you have suffered by the death of Prince Philip.

Your Majesty's sorrow is shared by the people of Saskatchewan.

We are deeply conscious of this personal and profound loss, in the passing of a great gentleman, held in esteem throughout Canada and indeed Commonwealth, for his steadfast and committed service to an extraordinary number of causes.

His Royal Highness's many visits to Saskatchewan, alone and with Your Majesty, left indelible memories for the people of Saskatchewan. We recall with fondness the manner in which Prince Philip conducted himself during his time in our province — always with genuine curiosity, good humour, and kindness.

We respectfully recognize Prince Philip's service as a decorated naval officer during the Second World War, including his participation and engagements to support soldiers from Saskatchewan as they fought to liberate Europe from tyranny.

We will forever remember how his devoted service at Your Majesty's side enhanced the dignity and deepened our affection for the Crown.

We assure Your Majesty of our own continued devotion and our determination to uphold and to support you as we have done throughout your reign.

We humbly pray that the knowledge of the deep and abiding impact Prince Philip had on so many people during his long life, along with the sentiments of affection and admiration from around the world, will sustain and comfort Your Majesty and your family in this hour of sorrow.

I so move.

[10:45]

The Speaker: — Will the Assembly take the motion as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question? I

recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to rise once again in this House and pay tribute to the memory of His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip. As we discussed the other day, his visits touched Saskatchewan people in so many ways, along with those visits of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. That friendship, that camaraderie that exists among the countries of the Commonwealth and our ongoing connection with the Crown is of great value to the province.

I want to join the Premier and members opposite, and on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition offer our sincere care and condolences to Her Majesty and to the entire royal family, and express our gratitude for the friendship and the service of Prince Philip to humanity and to the Commonwealth. Thank you very much.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — To request leave to move a motion of transmittal, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has asked for a leave to move a transmittal motion. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the Government House Leader.

TRANSMITTAL MOTION

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Assembly. I move:

That the address to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II be engrossed, signed by Mr. Speaker, and forwarded through proper channels.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

That the address to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II be engrossed, signed by Mr. Speaker, and forwarded through proper channels.

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.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Development of Small Modular Reactor Technology

Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for that round of applause. It's nothing really. But, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately due to time constraints, Mr. Speaker, I didn't get a chance to reply to the budget speech, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like to get it on the record, Mr. Speaker, that I thought the Minister of Finance did an incredible job putting together the '21-22 budget, especially, Mr. Speaker, in these exceptional times, and that she has, and this government has, my full support.

However, Mr. Speaker, today we're not here to talk about the budget. We're here to talk about small modular reactors, Mr. Speaker, and it's my pleasure to rise today to participate in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I'm going to make the following motion, Mr. Speaker:

That the Assembly supports the nuclear secretariat to aid the development of small modular reactor technology as a pathway to creating alternative energy resources and addressing concerns around climate change.

So, Mr. Speaker . . . or Madam Speaker. Whoa, missed that one; I was looking down at the time. Madam Deputy Speaker, in one of my previous roles in this government, I was able to meet with executives of SaskPower and learn more about the energy industry and the initiatives that we currently have in the energy industry in the past, present, and into the future. Now energy into the future will, I believe, come in many forms: solar, wind, natural gas, biomass, and SMRs [small modular reactor].

Now we have to remember the overall demand for power, what that demand is today and where that demand will be in the future. The demand for power grows every year and is only projected to keep growing. Everything seems to be power-based. E-cars [electric car] are becoming a big thing and I guess they all run on power, Mr. Speaker. So you have to charge them constantly, and that's going to be a huge demand. And that demand over the next decade will be massive and create an industry in itself.

Speaking of e-cars, it was on the news the other day that the . . . Well before that, I should say that I am in no way against e-cars. I think they will play an important role going forward in our fight against the climate change, Mr. Speaker. But some e-car supporters think the government should build charging stations throughout the province. Well power, Madam Deputy Speaker, is not free today. And with the demand increasing, there will be charging stations but they'll be more like gas stations, what we have, Madam Speaker. I have travelled a fair bit throughout California, or actually throughout North America and throughout Canada, and you do see charging stations. But, Mr. Speaker, they are at a cost and not owned by the government.

About power being free, as you know, you may have looked at my disclosure — I know the members opposite have for sure — online, my private disclosure. My wife and I own a car dealership, a Chrysler car dealership as a matter of fact, Madam Deputy Speaker. Now the manufacturer that we have, Chrysler, is committed to moving a lot of their products to electricity, to EVs [electric vehicle]. Our current Pacifica van and even our Jeep Wrangler now is coming in an EV, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So the manufacturer in their wisdom had sent us two charging stations, Madam Deputy Speaker — one to be installed for the dealership technicians and one outside the dealership for customer use. And of course, Madam Deputy Speaker, they were not free. They cost \$5,000 apiece to us, so not free. So on the outside, of course, anyone can plug their EV in and charge their vehicle — and actually the first one was a Tesla — at no charge, but that's not free to the dealership. Power, again I say, is not free. There's a cost to produce power and a cost to use it.

Then when we talk about energy production, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have to also talk about baseload power. That baseload power has to be there every day. It has to be available all day, all evening, and all night long. It has to be there to make your toast and coffee in the morning; to plug in your computer; charge your cell phone; turn on your lights in the evening or at night; watch TV; or for some of those people that need it, plug in their CPAP [continuous positive airway pressure] machine overnight.

We have to be able to provide power to people at an affordable price at all hours of the day. The wind doesn't blow every day and of course the sun doesn't shine all the time, but we still have to make sure that that baseload power is there and ready for people and companies to use. As well, some large companies throughout North America are doing, or looking at, self-generation for their power needs. But they still need that backup power available in case their self-generation falters. So we have to make sure that we have that baseload power in a backup capacity as well.

A large part of our energy and energy around the world right now, of course, is provided by coal-fired plants. With the federal government mandating the phasing out of coal, there is the strong need to develop power from other sources. Now I do agree we need to have multiple diversified sources of energy. The members opposite primarily talk about only options of solar and wind. Solar and wind are not the only two options. Biomass of course isn't going to be an option. Hydro is an option and small modular reactors are an option as well.

Now I'm not against wind-based energy at all, Madam Deputy Speaker. Saskatchewan currently has over 240 megawatts of wind power capacity from six wind power projects. And SaskPower is in the process of adding 385 more megawatts at a number of locations throughout the province, and an additional 300 megawatts RFP is in procurement.

Now, like everything, wind power is not without its issues, and it is not as green as the members opposite, or lots of people, would like to think. Not in the research that I've done that shows that on average, wind turbines contain 900 metric tonnes of steel, and the base that holds it all in place and contains that is about 30 000 metric tonnes of cement. Plus there's all the lubricants to keep

the turbines running smoothly on an ongoing basis. So I don't know about what you think, Madam Deputy Speaker, but that to me is a fairly large carbon footprint.

Now as you may know, I have a . . . I used to have — don't have it anymore, but just so the members know I don't have it anymore — I used to have a home in Palm Springs. Now I know, I know . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well I thought you'd get a kick out of it, yes. I know if anyone else has ever flown in there or even driven in the Coachella Valley, they would see that the Coachella Valley is home to over 4,000 wind turbines. And it's one of the first areas in the United States to have wind turbines, and they've been there for over 40 years, I believe it is. I mean, they were one of the first areas. And I know they do generate significant power for the entire valley.

However, the sad part is probably half of them are old and actually dead, and they're just standing there deteriorating. The turbines, of course, the arms of the wind turbines are not biodegradable. So if they were to take them down — and they do in other wind farms — they take them down and what they do is, they're not biodegradable, so they dig a hole and they bury them in the ground. Again, Madam Deputy Speaker, not as green as one would like to think they are. You know, they're very nice and they do provide power, and they are a source that we're going to need going forward. So they still have a place, but they're not as green as everybody would like to say.

Solar power is not as big in Saskatchewan as wind power. I guess when we get what seems like eight months of winter, that's not really good for solar power. But SaskPower is working towards achieving commercially unit-scale power, the solar power of 40 megawatts by the end of this year. As well, they have several other projects under development that would develop another 70 megawatts.

So, Mr. Speaker, as you can see, this government is working on many lines of power . . . Wow. Feel like I'm 13 again with my cracking voice. I only wish that I was 13 again. So I guess I have to look at SMRs. I guess . . . Oh no, sorry, Madam Speaker, that threw me off. I know the Premier joined with Ontario and New Brunswick because we have to sign an MOU [memorandum of understanding] on . . . Oh, sorry. Boy, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm just a way off-base here.

In December of 2019, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and New Brunswick signed an MOU to jointly work to develop and deploy small modular reactors in Canada. And for Canada, that can go a long way to addressing concerns around climate change. Just the other day, another province, Alberta, signed on to join this very exciting enterprise.

Now I don't know if anyone else has had a chance to look at the report prepared by Ontario Power, Bruce Power, New Brunswick Power, and SaskPower that was released the other day. It's called the *Feasibility of Small Modular Reactor Development and Deployment in Canada*, and if you haven't seen it, I urge you to check it out. It's very interesting reading.

I know when the Premier joined with Ontario and New Brunswick to sign that MOU to work on this technology, I thought what a great opportunity for my province and my community. The uranium industry right now employs over 3,300

people right here in Saskatchewan, right here, and a lot of those people live in my city, Prince Albert. SMRs will only help to ensure those jobs are enhanced and in fact grow that workforce. So I guess we have to look at SMRs from an environmental point of view, an economical point of view, and it always helps if you look at it with a common-sense point of view.

The Clean and Safe Energy Coalition states that nuclear energy has the lowest impact on the environment, which includes air, land, water, and wildlife. It does not produce harmful greenhouse gases and requires less area to produce the same amount of energy that other sources do. They go on to say incorporating nuclear power through SMRs into Saskatchewan's energy mix could provide SaskPower with the ability to generate up to 80 per cent of the province's electricity through zero emission sources, when combined with other renewable power sources.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, the pros are, safe for humans, safe for the environment, reduces carbon emissions, produces no harmful greenhouse gases, provides a huge boost to the economy of Saskatchewan. Now I guess the con would be that the image put out by people who oppose the use of nuclear power, that image of a super-large CANDU nuclear power plant like the one in Fukushima. And that image, I know members opposite like to put out there, but it's a long way from reality.

[11:00]

But the reality is SMRs are a totally different type. They are compact in a modular form which allows us to deploy them more easily and scale up as needed. Different forms of small reactors have been used for 60 years on submarines, aircraft carriers, and icebreakers without problems. Some small reactors have been used for education research. In fact there was one at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] for many years, operated very satisfactorily there.

In the feasibility of the small modular reactor study that I referred to earlier, it confirms that they have the potential to be an economically competitive form of energy. Economically, the nuclear industry is extremely important to the economy of Canada. It contributes about \$17 billion annually to the economy and employs about 76,000 people, and I said earlier, over 3,300 jobs right here in Saskatchewan and lots of them right in my city of Prince Albert.

Here's what SMRs can mean for Saskatchewan: over 700 more jobs during the product development, over 7,000 jobs during manufacturing and construction, over 700 jobs doing ongoing operations. It would have a positive impact on GDP [gross domestic product] of over \$8.8 billion and would result in an increase of provincial revenues of over \$3 billion. That's huge for our province, building an industry that's already here in Canada which is home to the richest uranium resources, and most of those resources are right here in Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan uranium industry has facilitated low-emission nuclear power in Canada and around the world for decades. And I hope the industry, with the development of the SMRs not only in Canada but around the world, the demand for Saskatchewan uranium will only grow exponentially.

Mr. Speaker, so I see that my time is just about done. I'm getting

the hook sign. And I would like all members to have another look at this government's Prairie Resilience plan, have a look at the feasibility study of the small modular reactor, have a read of this party's 20 actions in the Saskatchewan plan for growth, which of course part of that plan is about the modular reactor technology. Madam Deputy Speaker, as we move more and more towards the goals of zero emission, I believe SMRs will play a very important role in achieving these results.

And so, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to move the following motion:

That the Assembly supports the nuclear secretariat to aid the development of small modular reactor technology as a pathway to creating alternative energy resources and addressing concerns around climate change.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Prince Albert Carlton:

That this Assembly supports the nuclear secretariat to aid the development of small modular reactor technology as a pathway to creating alternative energy resources and addressing concerns around climate change.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into the 75-minute debate here today, and certainly to enter into discussion with respect to the uranium industry in Saskatchewan, a very important and proud industry to Saskatchewan, the potential of small modular reactors as well.

Mr. Speaker, I find it a bit passing strange that the members have taken their first opportunity in this legislative session to convene debate on this front today. That's okay. We'll engage in it. It's just at this time right now, Madam Deputy Speaker, we're engaged in this battle with COVID-19 and this government really is failing Saskatchewan people. They're failing to protect lives. They're failing to protect our economy. And people are stressed, Madam Deputy Speaker, as we speak. So I see the government wanting to not respond to those challenges today or provide leadership on that front for Saskatchewan people. That's their prerogative. That's their choice. I know Saskatchewan people certainly are looking for answers on that front.

And certainly I look forward to some discussion here around the potential of SMRs in Saskatchewan and globally, and how that could connect to the Saskatchewan uranium industry, Deputy Speaker. What I note though is that at the current moment we have a government that's really failing to act on the options by way of energy that are right in front of us, that are affordable, that are practical, that will put thousands of Saskatchewan people and businesses to work in their deployment, Deputy Speaker.

And I think of, of course, all of our renewables. I think of wind. I think of solar. I think of geothermal. I think of biomass. I think of battery storage and the importance of making sure we have technology that works for our grid on these fronts. I think of run-of-the-river hydro, Madam Speaker, and as well I think of,

you know, certainly as well we have natural gas as well that could play a role to support some of these renewables at this point.

I would like to take a moment just to talk about that incredible uranium industry that's so important to this province. It's quite simply a world-class resource and industry. The actual ore that we have in Saskatchewan is just the highest grade in the world. Not only is it the highest grade in the world, Madam Speaker, but we have such a volume of it and a strong history in mining it safely and producing and supplying to the world this important energy source.

Thousands of workers, you know, derive their livelihood, so many local businesses all through the North, from this very important industry. And in the case of employment in the North, of course we need to do so much better in ensuring opportunities through other industries and ensuring equity and opportunity for folks all through the North.

But certainly the uranium industry's been a very strong industry. And in many cases throughout the North you have families that have had multiple generations work in that industry in a very proud way as miners or connected to the supply chain and related businesses in other ways.

But right now as we look at the challenges before us, we need action now, Madam Deputy Speaker. And it's not as though there's not ways we can act. We know we've got this stagnant economy in Saskatchewan that was really devastated by the choices of this Sask Party government, a government that saw an economy slowing and by way of their choices, slammed on the brakes and stuck us in recession.

We also know that we have to step up to the realities of climate change. And we have ways that we can do so to reduce emissions in ways that are affordable and practical that could put thousands of people to work today. Certainly Saskatchewan knows full well the threats of climate change and those impacts. Producers in this province understand flood and drought better than probably anyone in the world, Madam Speaker, and it's on us to make sure that we're doing what we can to provide leadership on this front and making improvements. And it's not something that can't be accomplished.

But instead we have a government that's stuck in idle on this front, leaving this economy in recession, failing to create the jobs and the energy that people need and deserve today, Madam Speaker. And that's a loss for Saskatchewan people.

As the government explores SMRs, we need to make sure we fully consider the feasibility, the cost, Madam Speaker, making sure that the choices that are made are ones that can be counted on to ensure affordable power to the people of Saskatchewan — of course reducing emissions, but cost is an important one. And certainly with respect to SMRs, it's important to pursue all of this exploration, but to date it's unproven. So we need to make sure we're doing what we can today to secure our energy system, our energy grid for the people of the province.

I also want to make sure that we don't get into a situation where this government got us into with, say, the clean coal debacle, Mr. Speaker, where they sunk a lot of dollars, very expensive power, had significant overruns, and failed to secure a commercial

interest for Saskatchewan, failed to protect the property or intellectual rights of that project.

And so as we pursue SMRs, I really would push this government. There's a lot of public money that's going to be going into these exercises federally and provincially through our Crown. We need to make sure we're looking out for the long-term interests of Saskatchewan and of Canada. And we need to think about ownership of that intellectual property so that if something's able to be proven out and proven out environmentally and proven out from an economic perspective, that it's something that we can have a commercial return on, a royalty if you will, a benefit to Saskatchewan people.

And most certainly this exploration has to ensure that we're talking about Saskatchewan feedstock, Saskatchewan uranium. Much of what gets talked about around SMRs may actually shut out Saskatchewan's resource. We need to think of that world-class industry and make sure that their interests are secured in the development of this technology, and making sure that the type of technology that's chosen and that's invested in secures the feedstock of Saskatchewan.

If this is proven out and if it's proven out to be economic and if it's proven out to be environmental and if there's an uptake globally with SMRs and if we're able to consider them for deployment, we need to make sure that there's that return for Saskatchewan people of that very important industry and that they're not shut out, Madam Speaker.

I'd also like to just touch on the fact that of course we're talking about an incredibly important Crown corporation to the people of Saskatchewan. You know, and it's just sort of passing strange, you know, the relationship with the Sask Party and these Crown corporations. You know, it just wasn't long ago, Madam Speaker, of course, where they were taking a pledge to promise that they weren't going to sell off our Crown corporations, and then we saw what happened when they got elected with a great big majority, Madam Speaker.

They betrayed the people of Saskatchewan. They betrayed their word and took a direct run, including with legislation and meetings, to sell off our Crown corporations, Madam Speaker. They actually had meetings with respect to SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], they had meetings with SaskTel, Madam Speaker, and betrayed the word when they were in an election, Madam Speaker, and betraying Saskatchewan people's interests.

Of course, our Crowns were built by and for Saskatchewan people. SaskPower, SaskTel, SGI, SaskEnergy — these Crowns are so important to us today. They're important to considerations like we have here today around SMRs. They're critical around reducing emissions and ensuring stable, affordable power to the people of the province. And Saskatchewan people have learned where the Sask Party stands with respect to these Crowns. And they know that they just simply can't be trusted.

With respect to the debate here today, or the discussion, I'm thankful to enter in briefly here today.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Wash day on a Saskatchewan farm. A tired mother hauls water in buckets from the yard well, stokes up the kitchen stove, and fills the wash boiler. Hours later, she struggles with the family wash over a steaming wash tub and scrubbing board . . .

Supper for a harvest crew. Cream to separate. Butter to churn . . . As night falls, blanketing the farm in darkness, there are coal oil lamps to clean and fill; wicks to trim . . .

Fifty years ago, before the arrival of electricity, life on Saskatchewan farms offered little in the way of convenience, comfort or leisure time. Rural life was characterized by hardship and backbreaking chores.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that's an excerpt from *Winning the Prairie Gamble: Rural Electrification in Saskatchewan During the 1950s*. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, this isn't fiction. This is a day in the life, early married lives, of my grandmothers.

[11:15]

See, we're only two or three generations away or removed from a life that seems like it could be centuries ago. Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm quite proud of the sacrifices, hardships, and perseverance shown by agricultural people like my parents and grandparents.

I'm also very proud of the energy history of this province. You know, I've heard it my whole life in school. I went to school in Alberta and heard, why would you guys live in Saskatchewan? What a terrible place to live. It's flat. It's cold more than half the year. Well frankly, it makes us . . . That's what makes it good to be here because it helps make us strong, adaptive, and resilient.

And when I think of those first pioneers that moved out west from Europe, Eastern Canada, or the United States, and what they endured during those first winters — talk about adaptive and resilient. Survival was job one. But they prevailed, and you know, coal was a big reason that they did. And of course coal became the first big energy business for the province, and we were relying on it pretty much exclusively for years. Without the development of the coal industry, it's fair to say that provincial economic growth would have been very limited in those early years.

And when talking about monumental changes on the farm, I'll never forget what my dad called game-changing moments . . . It's a little bit tough talking about people that are no longer with us. So my folks were born in 1930 and 1931 and they grew up during the Great Depression. And of course they saw lots of change growing up. And of course there's a progression with change. It doesn't happen instantly, and it takes time to do that.

But you know, the farm I grew up on, like most homesteads in the early 1900s, relied on coal to heat and cook. They used coal for their furnace, their kitchen stove, and coal oil lamps, eventually adding a wind charger system with 32-volt battery system for added lighting, and windmills to pump water from deep wells that served the house as well as the barnyard.

Then a big transition began when *The Rural Electrification Act* came into being and the Sask Power Commission became a Crown corporation. In the stories I hear, many farmers were skeptical of having to deal with anything to do with the government and were a bit reluctant to sign on, but they realized quickly electricity would majorly improve life on the farm. That was game changer number one on our farm.

And I want to make a specific point here. And I'm going to refer back to the research paper, and I quote again. There's two principles that embody *The Rural Electrification Act*, and the second one I want to focus on: "the objective should be to develop rural electrification on a self-supporting basis" and "the initiative for expansion was placed in the hands of the farmers themselves."

So in other words, those farm services had to be self-sufficient, no government subsidies, something that the members opposite, I'm sure, can't grasp. Although, if you can't wrap your head around the fairness of a nominal road-use fee for an electric vehicle — they use the same roads as every other vehicle — you may have issues grasping anything sensible.

So as technology moves along, one tech advancement leads to another. On our farm, the coal furnace was replaced with a fuel oil furnace, a big improvement for the day. A dirty, smelly, inefficient way to heat, but far better and easier to handle and maintain than the coal system previously supplied. And the supply needed to be hauled in, which could be a problem in tough, long winters.

And then came game-changer number two. In the 1980s, the Devine government came up with the rural gas distribution program. Clean burning, endless supply of fuel to heat homes, barns, shops — you name it. Mid-efficiency furnaces were installed back then, but as technology advanced, higher-efficiency appliances replaced the old, including a natural gas insert in the fireplace my grandpa built in 1927. Improvements with each step. Fast forward to today and we've achieved great levels of efficiency in natural gas appliances, up to 98 per cent efficiency with natural gas boilers.

So now to tie in my incoherent rural history lesson, which I'm sure the members opposite don't approve of; they don't really care what happens in rural Saskatchewan today, let alone yesterday. And technology and the desire for efficiency has always been prevalent in this province. Reliable and sustainable baseload power generation has always been and will continue to be a priority. Technical advancement moves very rapidly today.

The fact that we have an extremely cold climate is not conducive to a high mix of renewable sources, period. The aspirational goals of net-zero emissions proponents are touting are extremely difficult and unrealistic. And as a member of the Penmore Group, I hear members of all political affiliations admitting that. They acknowledge that places that have severe and lengthy cold weather events, like we saw in Texas a month or so ago, require a diverse mix of reliable fossil fuels along with any renewables. Many of these jurisdictions consider natural gas to be a clean source, and I think the member from Rosemont maybe even acknowledged that. That's good to hear. We're so fortunate to have that resource and infrastructure, and we use it very wisely and efficiently here.

So here's what I believe our province can do to have a game-changing moment of our own on a worldwide scale. As detailed in the feasibility study released yesterday, small modular reactors are possible, and subsequently provide a huge opportunity for us. We've been mining the raw materials here for 50 or 60 years. Why not the value-added? Why not the enrichment? Why not the technology? Why not the clean energy end product? Be part of a global solution of emissions reductions that adds value and jobs to Saskatchewan people.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the old excuses are gone: it's too expensive; it's not scalable; it's not safe. The feasibility study speaks to all those things and more. It shows opportunity for these technologies to be placed pretty much anywhere on the planet in a cost-effective way. And when we start looking at those possibilities, they really are endless. The future employment and GDP growth possibilities are very intriguing when we're trying to balance budgets.

And yes, the critics remain, for the member from Regina University is quoted as saying a day or so ago, "I think we should be focused on job creation now, not job creation for a project that might be boots on the ground in, I believe, a decade," according to the release. Well yes, jobs today are important but so are jobs in the future. Something the NDP have never been very good at is looking forward.

Former Premier Lorne Calvert also called nuclear power the dirtiest form of power, and I quote, "Probably the dirtiest, given what comes out the tailpipe." Eighteen years later, it's the same old NDP, tone deaf to the issues and oblivious when it comes to the energy economy, unless it fits into their narrative of crisis. They tend to overuse the term "crisis."

Fortunately the province has seen some common-sense people with real world experience since 2007, and the shrewd voters in Saskatchewan clearly indicated yet again they don't buy into virtue-signalling politics. They know we've done a great job in Saskatchewan over the years with managing and balancing an ever-changing world with respect to focus on emissions and the environment.

Direct seeding, carbon capture, enhanced oil recovery, geothermal products — no matter where you look in Saskatchewan, you see innovation, adaptation, and resilience at work. Food, fuel, and fertilizer is our wheelhouse. Uranium and small modular reactors now has the opportunity to take its place smack dab in the middle of the global emissions reduction conversation.

I proudly second and support the motion put forward by my colleague and friend from P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton. Thank you.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into this debate today and apologize to folks for what they just had to listen to for the last 10 minutes, although my colleague, he does make some good comments in some areas. But I will have to correct some of those pieces, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I do thank you for the opportunity to be in the

debate today and for my colleague from Regina Rosemont, for his comments earlier as well.

I too find it strange that this is the first debate topic that's been posed by this government during the middle of a pandemic, Madam Deputy Speaker. We haven't been at this debate table for a while now. I was trying to think back. It might even be a year and a half since we've done one of these 75-minute debates because of this government's hesitancy to come back to this place to face their COVID-19 response, Madam Deputy Speaker, with the least amount of sitting days in the past year.

I do want to take some time to talk about the motion that's been put forward here today, Madam Deputy Speaker. I want to talk about a young woman on my campaign. And in preparation for the debate, I didn't have time to talk with her so I want to make sure that she is mentioned. So she spent quite a bit of time and was volunteered and compelled to volunteer specifically for our party because she wanted to identify that she does not support this government's approach to climate change. She doesn't think it goes far enough. She's a teenage climate activist who speaks quite eloquently about these challenges.

It is interesting to me as well to look at what the new generation is saying to us in the next generation. And I think, you know, I've certainly been overwhelmed seeing the crowds of folks who have come together in Saskatoon on Fridays at city hall to raise their discontent in general with governments at all levels, and to implore them to listen to the calls that the next generation is making to act now, to make sure that we have investment in renewables now, not to kick the can down the road. And this is what our next generation is calling for.

I feel a tremendous amount of personal responsibility to make sure that that happens. And so you know, I think of this individual and how she, you know, came out day after day and worked to make sure not only that we had New Democrats in the area to represent her interests, but on a much larger scale as well, as she continues to use her voice in her high school.

You know, it really says something when people who aren't old enough to vote yet are still implored to take these political actions and get involved. And I do think it's helpful to think about real people in this situation and to think about individuals who are looking for work today as well — 23,000 individuals who are out of work — who are really looking to this government to say what are the options in front of us? What are the jobs that are available? We all want to see the provincial economy grow and look to ways to generate energy and reduce emissions are certainly welcome, so we know all the reasons why we should be exploring economic opportunities, both here and abroad.

We've heard concerns about whether the SMR technology is ready. I think that's echoed even in the news releases that have come out. I know the members opposite have mentioned some of the news lately with other provinces. And we've heard concerns that, you know, we're not looking at . . . Even in Ontario, the earliest possible date for a site is 2028; Saskatchewan, 2032; New Brunswick, 2030. You know, we're still talking about something that is, you know, possible 10 years down the road. And I think that what my teenage climate activist would say to me if she was here today is that we need to be taking action now. And this government has had several opportunities to make movement in

this direction and has failed to do so.

We have concerns about the fact that this technology hasn't been put into use in any other jurisdiction, so we need to make sure that it's actually possible, that it's creating jobs, that it's safe, that we're using Saskatchewan resources.

And I have to say this. We were talking about the records of previous governments. There's no doubt that the uranium sector in this province is an important one. And it's important to note the groundwork for sustainability of this industry in Saskatchewan was really laid by New Democrats, by the Blakeney and Romanow governments. So if we want to take a trip down memory lane, I'll get on board, Madam Deputy Speaker, and identify that.

And we also have to make sure that this is going to be cost-effective as we move forward, because we've seen what this government does with taxpayer dollars, and we need to make sure that this is the right investment and the right time. So our focus has to be on good jobs, good prosperity for everyone in the province.

[11:30]

We know that climate change poses very serious risks to our province, and economic risks as well, Madam Deputy Speaker. It has a huge effect on our agriculture, on our lives, and threats to our economy that's dependent on industries that are going to see their markets change drastically. So with the global economy changing, Saskatchewan needs to be at the forefront of climate action and green jobs. We have the chance right now to take serious steps. We need a plan that diversifies our economy and puts us on the cutting edge of sustainable jobs for our future.

And this government continues to ignore the incredible opportunity to put people to work with the skills they already have as we take advantage of new technology and incredible untapped opportunities in clean, renewable energy production. We need to make these smart investments. The government, instead of taking advantage of technology that's available today, they're floating trial balloons about nuclear technology that won't be ready for 10, 15, maybe 20 years down the road.

They killed the burgeoning solar power industry in our province by eliminating Saskatchewan's net metering program. And we did raise this at the time, Madam Deputy Speaker, in 2019. We know that business owners in solar, you know, the Sask Party promised that they were going to consult these individuals, come up with a plan for the net metering program that they scrapped. And we have been calling on this government, of course, to make those consultations, to make sure that these individuals are consulted in this process.

It's 2021, Madam Deputy Speaker. This is the direction that we're going and we should be embracing it. We should be creating those new jobs for the future. Are we pro-jobs right now? Yes. Are we pro-jobs for the future? Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's not rocket science. Having a solid solar net-metering program is part of a healthy economy, and we have been vocal on this, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We also need to create green jobs. We had a plan that many folks

have probably heard about if they've been following along, called Renew Saskatchewan, that would remove the barriers that are keeping people from transitioning to green energy. And so many folks, you know, when you ask them, do you care about the environment, do you want to make a difference? They'll say, absolutely I care about this. But then you say, well you know, what actions are you able to take as an individual? And they feel a little bit limited or like this government doesn't really have their back on this front.

Well the Renew Saskatchewan program would create jobs, would allow for an assessment to take place, and then they could use their homes, their businesses, and look at ways that we can be more efficient, not having the worst rates in Canada, Madam Deputy Speaker. We need to get a handle on our emissions. We need to work to do that now and we need to make sure that jobs are created in the meantime.

We've called for the creation of green jobs, reducing emissions, ensuring funds from carbon pricing are redistributed in a progressive manner that recognizes the distinct needs of rural communities and ag producers. They claim to support rural Saskatchewan, but we've heard them oddly silent on that, Madam Deputy Speaker.

To commit to a legislated target of 100 per cent emissions-free electricity by 2050, work with our Crown sector to make sure that's possible, work with SaskPower, develop a province-wide on-bill financing program modelled after Renew Sask, increase funding for post-secondary institutions, and advocate to the federal government for enhanced support, Madam Deputy Speaker. This work needs to be happening now. We need to chart a better course forward, and I would encourage the members opposite to look at what options we have in front of us right now. Thank you.

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

Mr. McLeod: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'd like to begin my comments with a quote. Now these aren't my words, but I think they accurately summarize the motion being put before the Assembly today, and they may actually sound familiar. The quote reads as follows:

We have the chance right here and now to take serious steps to insulate our economy from future shocks. We need a plan that diversifies our economy and puts us on the cutting edge of sustainable jobs for the future.

Madam Deputy Speaker, small modular reactors, otherwise known as SMRs, are precisely that. SMRs can potentially deliver zero-emission, consistent, reliable power. They are cutting edge and will provide long-term, sustainable jobs well into our future. The Conference Board of Canada report identified that the manufacturing and construction of SMRs will add over 7,000 jobs per year to Saskatchewan. On the operations side, SMRs will create 728 jobs per year in this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan government understands the importance of diversifying our energy resources, and we have committed to taking meaningful and measured steps towards reducing carbon emissions in our province. But we also

need to recognize that there is a need for consistent and reliable baseload power. It is simply unrealistic to suggest that solar and wind power alone will meet the needs of our communities in a stable and predictable way. We cannot ignore reality on either side of this conversation.

So the development of SMR technology described in this motion is precisely what the quote I mentioned is calling for. It is our opportunity to take a serious step that will meaningfully reduce our carbon emissions while still insulating our economy from job losses. It will diversify our delivery of energy while ensuring stable, reliable, and consistent power to our communities across the province. SMRs are an innovative, green alternative to complement our other sources of power generation.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm happy to acknowledge the quote, which so accurately describes what the member from Prince Albert Carlton is proposing with this motion. And that quote came from the Leader of the Opposition not two weeks ago and was repeated just today by the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

I believe this is a great opportunity for the opposition to put their leader's words into actions. They can support this motion and, like he said, right here and now take a serious step that will insulate and diversify our economy while creating cutting-edge, sustainable jobs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as our Premier has stated many times, no one has the moral high ground when it comes to the environment. We all care about protecting the world we live in and ensuring the safe and healthy future for generations to come. So when an opportunity presents itself that helps protect the environment by lowering carbon emissions, delivers consistent, reliable baseload power, and protects and creates jobs for those who work in the energy industry, we should all feel excited, if not compelled, to further explore and aid in the development of technology that can take us there.

Now before I get into some of the details about the benefits of SMR technology, I need to say, if you had asked me 30 years ago if I could envision myself arguing in favour of nuclear energy, I probably would have said, not a chance. Because 30 years ago I remember learning about the tragedy of Chernobyl. I still recall the horrible images of Fukushima a decade ago.

Madam Deputy Speaker, no one here is ignoring those incidents or the severe consequences from them. But it's important to note what we are discussing today is nothing like those massive old nuclear power plants. For starters people need to remember that the power plants like Chernobyl and Fukushima used technology from the 1970s. That's 50 years ago. We have many members in this Assembly who were not even born yet when that technology was developed.

I know that when people speak of nuclear power, they often imagine massive towers, piles of concrete and steel. Many of our thoughts then flash to media images of crumpled water tanks, collapsing walls, maybe even the loss of life. It's easy to want to dismiss the conversation about nuclear energy out of hand, just toss it aside, because we shudder to think of those things. We all do.

But if we do that, if we slam the door on the idea, then we ignore the critical fact that technology advancements have come immensely far in the past few decades. We would lose all the benefits and opportunities available from those technological advancements. Consider for a moment, what if we had turned our back on other ideas every time tragedy struck, instead of learning from the experiences and developing safer technology because of them. Would we still be driving cars? Flying airplanes? Would we have skyscrapers or amusement parks?

Madam Deputy Speaker, I still remember vividly the Challenger space shuttle disaster, January 28th, 1986. Imagine if NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] had decided to discontinue their space program and been unwilling to invest and develop newer, safer technology because of that. Where would we be today? What advancements in educational opportunities would have been lost?

Again, Madam Deputy Speaker, SMRs are entirely different from traditional nuclear power plants. Those old reactors sat upon hundreds of acres of land. They generated thousands of megawatts of power. They were massive in size and scale and risk. That is not what we are talking about today. Small modular reactors are just that. They're small and they're modular. They typically generate 300 megawatts of power or less and they're capable of being moved on the back of semi-trailers. We cannot allow misperceptions and fears of past tragedies from a very different thing to limit our consideration of this new, exciting opportunity.

Let's consider some of the advancements in this field. First I want to address the issue of waste. Most of us cringe at the thought of nuclear waste, but much like other technology surrounding SMRs, there have been significant advancements in reactor designs that allow them to produce less waste. And better still, New Brunswick has plans to build an SMR that will actually use existing waste from traditional nuclear reactors as its fuel. For me that's kind of like how Doc Brown used garbage to fuel the DeLorean in *Back to the Future II*. New Brunswick's plan will see that SMR built right alongside an existing traditional reactor, then use the waste from the old reactor to fuel the new one.

SMRs can also generate significantly more energy from the same amount of fuel as a traditional reactor. Thus they are capable of generating more power with a fraction of the waste. They are nearly emission-free so they have a negligible impact on the natural environment around them, and they are so safe for humans that the Clean and Safe Energy Coalition determined a person would have to live next to a nuclear plant for over 2,000 years to get the same amount of radiation exposure that we all receive from a single diagnostic medical X-ray.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what we are discussing today is nothing like massive, traditional nuclear power plants. We are talking about small modular reactors — high-efficient, extremely low carbon emitting, and safe for humans and the environment. Again we cannot simply ignore advancements in technology and safety that make this an entirely different conversation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have a real opportunity here. We can support and expand our energy sector in a way that creates jobs, relies upon our own uranium resources for which we have some of the largest reserves in the world. We can do so in

partnership with other provinces across the nation and we can be global leaders on the cutting edge of low-emission power generation that provides sustainable jobs and utilizes resources that we find and market right here in Saskatchewan. This is something we can do that actually reduces greenhouse gases in a meaningful and measurable way without compromising energy needs or our jobs.

Alternatively, I suppose, we could just tax people for carbon emissions they have little ability to control and then cross our fingers that might have some assistance to the environment. But I prefer the first option, so I will support this motion, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise this morning and enter into this 75-minute debate.

I did listen and I did take notes as the other members were speaking — the member from Carlton and Rosemont, from Kindersley, Fairview, and from Moose Jaw North. I'm not sure how others prepare for these debates, Madam Speaker, but I usually like to come in with a number of notes and then, you know, listen to the debate that's happening and perhaps change some of what I'm going to say, respond to some things that I've heard.

The first change is going to be this. I'm going to read a definition into the record:

A straw man fallacy occurs when someone takes another person's argument or point and distorts it or exaggerates it in some kind of extreme way, and then attacks the extreme distortion as if that is really the claim the first person is making.

Mr. Speaker, and I think we've got — or, Madam Speaker, excuse me — we've got ample evidence of that sort of fallacy here and a few ad hominem attacks. But I'll leave those aside for the minute.

[11:45]

With regard to my prepared remarks, it certainly has been a year, and the challenge and the heartbreak of COVID-19 has impacted people's lives and livelihoods here at home and right around the world. But I think it also has put into sharp focus how interconnected this planet is, how decisions and conditions made in other jurisdictions impact us here. And while it's reasonable that the pandemic has led the news cycle over the last year, there are certain other happenings in the world that continue to go on, including the climate emergency, Madam Speaker.

In 2019, so just before COVID-19 broke in most areas of the world, there was the UN [United Nations] climate change conference in Madrid in December of 2019. And at that conference, the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, said that the summit marks the "point of no return" in humanity's fight against climate change, advocating for drastic changes to be made.

Madam Speaker, you know, there have been changes since then, of course, as well. We've seen, you know, the carbon challenge at the Supreme Court. We've seen, I think, the Conservative Party of Canada changing their tune a little bit. And we've also seen these memorandums around small modular nuclear reactors in the country, and in 2020 we saw the Canadian small modular action plan put out by the federal government. So a lot has been changing behind the scenes.

And this is certainly, you know, a topic of debate. I would agree with my colleagues that perhaps this isn't the debate that we thought the people of Saskatchewan have top of mind right now, but I'm happy to enter into it anyway. So what are we talking about with small modular reactors, fission reactors, that typically are defined as under 300 megawatts and up to about 700 for medium?

Certainly changed technology. A lot of the reactors that we see in Canada right now, like we see in Ontario, date back to the '70s, so there is some new technology here, Madam Speaker. It involves the splitting of radioactive atoms like uranium into smaller elements that release heat, and then that heat is converted to electrical energy, usually through turning water into steam through a turbine. So it turns the turbine and creates electricity that way.

I will read from some of the research that I did prior to this debate about the benefit of nuclear energy being that nuclear energy doesn't rely on burning coal, like oil or gas. This means no carbon emissions from the generating of electricity, which is why it sometimes is classified as a green energy source. But that label is often called into question. Of course it is the case that nuclear waste remains highly radioactive, so that is something to deal with, Madam Speaker. I think part of the mix and part of what we're called to do is look at the full span of this.

And it doesn't mean that there aren't emissions caused throughout the supply chain of these SMRs, Madam Speaker. Not a deal-breaker, but certainly something we can't gloss over. And I think that what is required here of us is to be sure that we have our eyes wide open and that we make good choices, because these choices are going to be with us for a very long time in this province, in this country. And as we've canvassed, I think that they have global implications.

So you know, some of the questions that I think we should always be asking when we're tasked with something as important as this: what the energy mix looks like in this province for the next 10, 20, 30 years, and the impacts that our children . . . Likely we won't be here to deal with most of the impacts, but our children and our grandchildren will. Who benefits? I think that's a question we always have to ask. Who holds the risk? You know, not all of us will hold the risk here in the same way.

Where will they be built? Where will they be used? A lot of the references that I see make reference to northern communities. What are the alternatives? Who holds the intellectual property, as the member from Regina Rosemont canvassed? Are we undertaking our duty to consult? I think that's something that no government, unfortunately, in this country has a very good record on, and I think that's something that has to definitely be taken into consideration.

And what's the goal? There's a quote that I was thinking of: "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there." That's by Lewis Carroll. Let's be really clear about what our goals here are. What are our job goals? What are our energy goals? I think the members opposite think that there's a big point of disagreement here. I think what we're asking you to do is to do your research. You know, I think that there's probably pretty good consensus on the need for jobs, the need to diversify our electric grid. There's a need for base power, of course. Renewables have to be part of the mix, and we have to look at what are our options for base power? I think that that's reasonable.

I think we need policies and decisions by this government that work for the majority of people in the long term. And I think that the only way that we can do that is to hold these conversations out in the open, with open minds, open eyes, and not attack straw man arguments . . . and polarizes, which we so disappointingly have seen time and time again, Madam Speaker.

And you know, I do think that there are some points where we can have reasonable debate here, but I'd have more confidence if I hadn't witnessed the actions of this government over the past 13 years — failure to meaningfully invest in wind and solar and geothermal, crushing the solar and the electric vehicle initiatives in this province. And also part of this mix, Madam Speaker, has to be not only generation of power, but conservation and efficiency. And we've seen very little to that end, unfortunately, and in fact some steps backwards.

So I think we agree that climate change is real. I'm not entertaining arguments from anyone who doesn't think that that's the case. We know that catastrophic weather events are happening more and more frequently, and that's impacting our agricultural sector. And we have a huge responsibility to those who will come after us.

I always think I have more time than I do, so I'm going to go through this fairly quickly.

I think this is also the case: none of us are experts in nuclear science. I think that's not what we're called here to do. We're here to do our best. We're called to listen, to identify solutions, to work to find solutions, and to govern for all in this province today and into the future. I suspect that we won't find the answers here today, Madam Speaker, but I hope we have an open and transparent discussion.

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

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I listened to the member from Regina University's comments, and it seems like her greatest criticism on this week's release was that this plan is too long term for her liking. She doesn't want to see long-term planning and solutions. Planning even for a nuclear reactor must be immediate. To the member from Saskatoon Fairview, who also commented that it seemed to take too long, how short does SaskPower plan ahead for power generation and distribution under an NDP government?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from

Saskatoon Fairview.

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I was confused at the beginning there because I thought many of our young women were getting confused again here. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, we need to be making investments now. I'm glad that the member is listening to the speeches that we're providing, and I do hope that she can convince her government that we need to be making these investments today. We have so many different young individuals in our province that we are responsible to that are, I would say, more acutely aware of these issues than some of the older folks who . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, no, the younger folks that are coming forward are certainly more aware of these issues and are holding us accountable.

We have a responsibility to make sure that we are making those investments in solar, that we are creating those green jobs. I've provided the full list of our expectations around green initiatives, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I'd be happy to provide those if there are more questions for myself.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Before I pose my question, you know, the member for Kindersley, I heard him just say that our NDP MLAs don't care about rural people and we never have. And you know, I was just going to get straight to my question, but I heard my grandparents roll in their grave, Madam Deputy Speaker.

My grandmother was raised in Alameda, Saskatchewan. My great-grandfather was the postmaster there from 1933 to 1953 after he joined the Royal Flying Corps. But it's actually my grandfather I want to talk about for a moment here, who was raised in a one-room schoolhouse . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm getting to the question; this is context for the question . . . who was raised in a one-room farmhouse in Grenfell, Saskatchewan, Madam Deputy Speaker. He was part of a generation of rural folks who built, proudly built some of the most innovative and bold policies that benefit all of us today.

The Deputy Speaker: — Just to caution the member, you have one minute to ask your question, so now we will go to the other side, government side. I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll try and be concise with my question here. If you browse through the members opposite's Renew Saskatchewan plan, you will see they have conveniently left out nuclear energy. To the member from Saskatoon Fairview: why was nuclear power left out of your plan? And would the NDP put a royalty on nuclear power if they were in power? Thank you.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm glad to hear that the members opposite are reading our Renew Saskatchewan plan, and in fact I would really like for them to join our call. Let's talk about this plan a little bit. I really

appreciate the opportunity to go into more detail because I only got 10 minutes here.

This plan calls for clean energy. It calls for good jobs, lower bills. It's an opportunity to generate income to pay off through savings. So there's actually a loan program here, Madam Deputy Speaker, that allows people to make that initial investment, which is something that this government hasn't even attempted to pick up. Now when we talk to people about wanting to invest in renewables, this is the type of work that they want to be able to do. But they say to me, I can't afford to put solar panels on my house. It's such an extravagant cost. We need measures that are going to take action today, Madam Deputy Speaker. We're not opposed to this in theory but it's so far down the road. It's something we need to look at and we'll continue to do that.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Well the member for Saskatoon Fairview was speaking about a young campaign worker on her campaign who had serious concerns about climate change. When she noted that this young person was not able to vote yet, the member from Kindersley was heard to be saying, that's a good thing. I wonder if he wants to put that on the record. And does he have anything else to say to young people who are concerned about climate change?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The opposition obviously likes to cherry-pick comments. They act like they're very innocent. They're very innocent on this side. And part of the thing is, what we see is some adult people perhaps instilling some fear on certain issues. So you know, there's a legal voting age in this province and it's a good thing. It's a good thing. Parents need to teach their children. Teachers need to teach students. Everybody needs their lane. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, what I'd like to say is everyone has a right to vote. When they get to that point, they have a right to vote. And the folks in this province very, very clearly stated who they think is best to handle the affairs of this province.

[12:00]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's easy to understand the painful pretzel act by members opposite, given their leader's history back to 2009 loss to Lingenfelter, partially on the division of his position from Lingenfelter's support for nuclear. Simple question to the member from Regina Lakeview: yes or no? Do you support the development in and by Saskatchewan in SMR technology?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. And as has been said by my colleagues, I would invite the member to listen to my comments. I could have said more. I think that the space we need

to hold right here is to be thoughtful, to be forward-looking, and to consider. I have constituents with concerns. I hope that they will be considered and not just pushed aside and erased to look for the next political wedge issue, which we see time and time again from these members.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I listened to the speech from the member from Moose Jaw North and heard him talking about how he, you know, says he understands climate change, says he understands the issues and that we need to be taking action. Will the member from Moose Jaw North convince their government to get zero-emission energy sources on the grid before the 2030?

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

Mr. McLeod: — Thank you. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I want to thank the member for the question. I think it's important to remember that the conversation around climate change needs to be broader than carbon pricing, which is what the members opposite seem to like to talk about. The fact of the matter is, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the motion before the House today is on the development of small modular reactors.

Now those don't happen overnight. You don't snap your fingers and have those in place overnight. I think what's important to note that there are consultations happening right now. This is a motion to advance the development and to do more research so that those can be rolled out safely and in in consultation with Indigenous communities and the stakeholders. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think with those consultations currently happening and the research continuing, then the appropriate time is being taken.

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

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The members opposite actually seem open to the discussion on nuclear power, but unfortunately their federal affiliates are playing a different tune at the federal level. Would the member from Saskatoon Fairview, what would she do to advocate for their position against their federal affiliates?

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

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

Motion No. 1 — Job Plans for Saskatchewan

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a privilege to rise here today and speak about the motion that I will be introducing today. The motion that I will be later moving will read as follows:

That the Assembly will call upon the government to

implement a jobs plan that would include each of the following measures:

removing the provincial sales tax from construction labour and restaurant meals;

introducing a Sask-first procurement model to ensure Saskatchewan workers are prioritized on public projects in Saskatchewan;

introducing a \$15-an-hour minimum wage phased in over the next four years; and

prioritizing investments in renewable power to create good green jobs.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I only caught the tail end of the spirited past debate, and it is really good to see members on the other side of the aisle so passionate about building energy security for this province and creating jobs. But what we're going to be talking about in this motion is creating jobs here and now today in Saskatchewan for the very people who are desperately looking for work and who need help right now.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, budgets are about values and I think it's fair to assume that every single person in these chambers wants the people of Saskatchewan to be working, to be fulfilled, to have a good mortgage-paying job that allows them to look after their family and ensure not just economic security but economic prosperity, that allows them to pursue their interests, that allows them to start businesses, develop other friendships and partnerships and develop their tastes and really contribute to what makes Saskatchewan truly great. Because honestly, Madam Deputy Speaker, just simply being able to get through every single day and just being able to make sure that there's dinner on the table, that's not enough. That's not enough, Madam Deputy Speaker. People need prosperity and people need that security in order to truly develop to their fullest potential, and I think that is something, I believe that is something every single member of this House believes.

We may believe that there are different ways to get there, and I'm going to speak about some of the ways that we think that we can help people get there. But I think it is critically important that we actually respect and commit ourselves to building that potential and building that prosperity for every single man, woman, and child in this province, Madam Deputy Speaker, because it's not just about getting through the day. It's about building for the future. It's about having a vision for the province. That is something Saskatchewan has had in the past. We have excelled. We have undertaken great nation-changing projects, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And I firmly and sincerely believe that if we actually focus enough, we actually really commit ourselves to building people up. We can help every single person not just excel for themselves, but excel for this province. Because when people have that ability and they have that security, they're not just going to be focussed on getting through the day. They're going to be focussed on starting businesses, on innovating, building new technologies, launching patents, creating art, writing books, being a good neighbour, looking after their grandchildren. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is what every single member in this

House should be committed to doing and should be doing to help build up for every single one of their constituents and every single one of the constituents who may not reside within their own boundaries.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, we've gone back and forth already a number of times on the budget for the year 2021, and we've spoken at length about some of the areas where we believe that there should be more investments. And we in opposition have provided a number of different solutions and a number of different options to this House. Some of them we've talked about at length, even just today — removing the PST from construction labour and restaurant meals. And we believe that this is important, not just to help these industries, but this will allow more money to stay in the economy and to circulate.

And fundamentally, I really don't see that as a left-right dichotomy. And it is really disappointing to see every single issue split that way because some of these fundamentally should not be, and some of these issues, Madam Deputy Speaker, have their roots in some more traditionally progressive conservative values. And I would urge the members opposite to reflect on what some of those values truly were, because governments of different political stripes have done wonderful things for this country and wonderful things for this province.

You know, I reflect on the fact that it was the Progressive Conservative federal government that had the first female cabinet minister. You know, empowering women and lifting up women across this country should not just be an issue that New Democrats are talking about. And I would encourage the members opposite to take some of those things into consideration, because not every single one of these proposals falls into what they'd like to see as just a simple left-right divide. These are common-sense solutions, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Diversifying our energy sources. We have spoken about that today. And while it is wonderful to see that the members opposite are focussed on technologies in the future, we also have to be focussed on technologies that are here today and that can be supported by the people of this province, the taxpayers of this province, so that we're not funding another first-of-its-kind, costly pilot project. We need to diversify our energy sources and create good jobs today.

And it shouldn't be that it's only New Democrats who care about solar, wind, geothermal, biofuels, and other emerging sources. It shouldn't be that, even in considering new solar projects right here in Regina, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this government is looking at shuttering them after 20 years, only giving them a 20-year lifespan, Madam Deputy Speaker. We should be looking at some of our wonderful industries: mineral processing, green energy, forestry manufacturing, petrochemical product processing. Retooling things like the Evraz steel mill. And we should be creating new value-added incentives.

We are a landlocked province, and the more that we can do to stimulate economic growth and to manufacture and to add value here at home, not only is that going to help our local economy, help our provincial economy, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is also going to do things like help reduce emissions in an area where it is not going to hurt the economy at all. And it would be wonderful if the members opposite would be thoughtful and

consider some of these things.

I've spoken at length this week about a Sask-first procurement policy that prioritizes local companies and workers, and while capital spending is wonderful, you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan construction companies don't bid on out-of-province projects the same way that companies in Alberta and Manitoba do. And it would be wonderful if the members opposite would actually consider giving local companies the opportunity to bid on these projects and give them the chance to ensure that they're at equal footing with some of these out-of-province companies whom the members opposite seem happy to send contracts to time and time again.

I've spoken at length personally and politically about phasing in a \$15-an-hour minimum wage and, Madam Deputy Speaker, the members opposite may not like to hear it, but there is not a correlation. Study after study after study, there are now new 80-year studies coming out of the United States that indicate over and over again a higher minimum wage does not kill jobs. It does not decrease job creation. It lifts people out of poverty. It lifts people out of poverty and it allows more money to circulate in the economy.

And I'm not sure why the members opposite really need to heckle when we're talking about lifting people out of poverty. It seems to me that that's something we should agree on regardless of which side of the House we're sitting on, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Affordable child care for working families, Madam Deputy Speaker. This is something that we know has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is something I've seen even just this week in my own business. One of my employees is a single mother and is struggling to balance how she comes to work and how she looks after her children with remote learning. And that's a reality that hundreds of thousands of people are facing across this country and thousands of Saskatchewan families.

You know, if the member from Prince Albert would like to continue to heckle about working single mothers, I will stop and listen and I will read his comments into the record. So obviously it's pretty clear that the member from Prince Albert isn't happy to hear that there are mothers working in this province and that the majority of people working in this province and struggling with child care are women and are young families.

And the members opposite might like to talk about the '90s and talk about the past, but I have a news flash for them. The majority of our population is young and is working, and that is wonderful. But these are people who need solutions today and they need an economy that works for them now, not simply reflections on ancient history.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we've also spoken at length about the need for paid sick days. We are seeing outbreaks of COVID-19 in workplaces across the province. We hear tale after tale of people going into work because they can't afford to stay home. And this is a complicated issue, Madam Deputy Speaker, I appreciate that. I am an employer and I give my workers paid sick days when they need it.

And I think that is something every single employer, with the

help of the government and with the support of members from both sides of the aisle, should be able to consider. Because not only is it the right thing to do, it is one of the only ways we are going to be able to get out of this COVID-19 pandemic, if people can afford to stay home and ensure that they can be healthy, and not going to work because it's a choice between their health or paying their rent.

[12:15]

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, I've mentioned a couple times the need for youth employment. It's great that our youth employment numbers aren't the lowest in the country; however we are facing another summer where businesses and organizations like camps, which employ thousands of young people every summer, aren't able to hire. Camps in Saskatchewan employ over 1,000 young people, and those are 1,000 young people right now who are wondering what they're going to be doing for work.

We need internship programs and we need opportunities. Internships with Crowns and in the public service to provide young people both the experience that they need in the workplace — the value that every single one of us gets and the dignity that we get from being able to go to work and earn a living — as well as the opportunity to pursue their dreams, whether that's in post-secondary, starting a business, or staying right at home and starting a family of their own.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we've talked about a couple industries which the members opposite have killed in the past. The film employment tax credit comes to mind. This is nationally renowned as a joke that this has been killed. It would certainly, during times of economic uncertainty like we find ourselves in now, create immense value for the province, not just in those direct jobs, but in the spinoff jobs that would help our struggling restaurant sectors, that would help our retail sectors, that would contribute to more houses being purchased.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the members opposite can heckle about this being in the past, but there are people who would come back to this province, people who are currently underemployed, people who want the opportunity to do the job, the skilled job that they were trained to do. Madam Deputy Speaker, my hairdresser who is a wonderful, wonderful person, small-business owner, equitable employer, and community volunteer, she worked in the film industry. That was her passion. That was her job. And while she may yell at me for going too long between haircuts, you know, she misses that career and that's something that she wishes she could go back to. And Madam Deputy Speaker, while Julia's built a new life and a new career for herself, there are hundreds of other people across this province who weren't able to do so and left.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there's other industries that have been hit hard by COVID that seem fairly non-partisan to me. We all know as Plato said, healthy body, healthy mind, and the ability to stay active and ensure that we're all getting that little bit of fitness that you need for both your physical wellness and your mental wellness is important. And so we've called on this government to look at a fitness incentive, a \$300 tax deduction that would both allow people that added bit of wellness, that added bit of physical activity which would contribute to

improving physical and mental health coming out of COVID-19. And it would also help a struggling gym and fitness sector, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, I've listed a number of items here, just suggestions, which hopefully the members opposite will take into consideration. Because really, Madam Deputy Speaker, this economy here in Saskatchewan, while we all, we all hope for the best, we also need to plan and we need to grow and we need to diversify.

And we can't just grow; we have to look at developing. It can't just be about constant exponential growth with nothing for the working people, nothing for the families, nothing for the small-business owners who are struggling and suffering right now. We need this government to implement measures today to help this economy, so we don't find ourselves in dark times. We need families to be able to pay their rent, to buy houses, to go to the grocery store, to start small businesses.

And as I said off the top, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is not just about making ends meet. The goal of the economy is not just ensuring people aren't starving. And I want to reflect for a moment on how sad it is that we seem to be debating back and forth whether a successful economy is one that only allows people to make their bare, bare necessities, maybe save a little bit for retirement.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a true economy provides people with economic empowerment and economic freedom. When I move the subsequent motion, I hope the members opposite will actually sit and think, think about their principles and think about what true economic prosperity looks like for families and for this province overall, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Because as I said, it's not just about making ends meet, is it? It is about helping every single member, every single member of a family, every single citizen of this province, every single person moving here from out of province or overseas. It is helping those people achieve their full potential because nothing is more tragic than waste, Madam Deputy Speaker. Nothing is more tragic than wasted opportunity, than wasted potential, and the struggle and the personal suffering and the angst that goes along with that.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, without any further comments, I will move the following motion:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to immediately implement a jobs plan that would include each of the following measures:

removing the provincial sales tax from construction labour and restaurant meals;

introducing a Sask-first procurement model to ensure Saskatchewan workers are prioritized on public projects in Saskatchewan;

introducing a \$15-an-hour minimum wage phased in over the next four years; and

prioritizing investments in renewable power to create good green jobs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that motion and conclude my remarks.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina University:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to immediately implement a jobs plan that would include each of the following measures:

removing the provincial sales tax from construction labour and restaurant meals;

introducing a Sask-first procurement model to ensure Saskatchewan workers are prioritized on public projects in Saskatchewan;

introducing a \$15-an-hour minimum wage phased in over the next four years; and

prioritizing investments in renewable power to create good green jobs.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate on this motion today.

Certainly when we talk about a jobs plan, it's something we've been raising since we . . . well before we returned actually in the session here. And when we think about this, I think about my constituents. And I know this is something that many members in this place will be able to relate to is those conversations on doorsteps, those conversations where folks pick up the phone and want to tell you their story.

And I've heard a lot of stories about folks who are struggling to find work, who don't feel supported by this government. Stories from individuals who work in construction that tell me, you know, there are such thin margins in this industry that they have seen that this PST has made a difference in whether some projects have been able to go forward.

I think about, you know, many families, including my own. At the end of each week, you know, like to order from a restaurant that you like to support. We've seen that support continue throughout the pandemic. But we know that these industries are struggling as well. And in order to be able to put our money behind them, those dollars do go a long ways in helping to provide that support. So the PST on restaurants has been damaging.

You know, we talk about people working full-time and living in poverty. I've heard from so many folks in my constituency who are in this position, who are working full-time but still need to stop at the food bank on the way home because they can't afford . . . Or they have to work three jobs and don't have any time with their family to be able to make a decent wage or are afraid of losing their house.

And I also think about the lost opportunity in renewables and green jobs, which we've spent a lot of time talking about today,

Madam Deputy Speaker, and how government could be taking those steps to create those opportunities to make sure those jobs are there for these folks as we move forward.

So I think it's useful to think of the human side of this, Madam Deputy Speaker. Sometimes when folks talk about the economy it starts to seem like this abstract concept. But these are real people. These are real lives and real livelihoods that we have a responsibility to protect here.

So you know, I certainly am supportive of the motion of my colleague from Regina University. But with that I would move to adjourn debate on this motion for today.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Deputy House Leader.

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I move that this Assembly do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved to adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adjourn?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — The House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:26.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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