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DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN 2nd 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

Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP) Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP) Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP) Bradshaw, Hon. Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP) Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP) Carr, Hon. Lori - Estevan (SP) Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP) Cockrill, Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP) Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP) Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP) Docherty, Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP) Domotor, Ryan - Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP) Duncan, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP) Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn - Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP) Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP) Francis, Ken — Kindersley (SP) Friesen, Marv — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP) Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP) Grewal, Gary - Regina Northeast (SP) Hargrave, Joe - Prince Albert Carlton (SP) Harpauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP) Harrison, Daryl - Cannington (SP) Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP) Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP) Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP) Kaeding, Hon. Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP) **Keisig**, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP) Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP) Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP) Lawrence, Greg - Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP) Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP)

Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP) Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP) Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP) McLeod, Tim - Moose Jaw North (SP) McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP) 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) Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP) Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP) Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP) Reiter, Hon. Jim - Rosetown-Elrose (SP) Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP) **Ross**, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP) Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP) Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP) Skoropad, Dana — Arm River (SP) Steele, Doug - Cypress Hills (SP) Stewart, Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP) Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP) Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP) Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP) Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.) 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) — 12; Independent (Ind.) — 1

<u>Clerks-at-the-Table</u> Clerk — Gregory A. Putz Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel — Kenneth S. Ring, Q.C. Deputy Clerk — Iris Lang Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyk

Sergeant-at-Arms — Sean Darling

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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Speaker: — It is now 7 p.m.

MOTION UNDER RULE 61

Support for Ukraine

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Saulteaux.]

I just want to acknowledge everyone here this evening, and I want to take this time to say that I'm honoured to rise again and that I will speak very briefly, and yeah, I will speak briefly to this. I'm very honoured to be rising today in support of the Ukrainian people and what they are living through right now.

I also want to speak about this scarf and the scarves I wear regularly in this House. As I was saying earlier, today you would have seen my female colleagues and I wearing these flowerprinted scarves. These scarves were adopted by my ancestors, my grandmothers, my kohkoms. And they're referred to, as Indigenous people, as kohkom scarves. I want to share what it represents and the relationship that existed and continues to exist between the Indigenous peoples and the Ukrainian peoples.

The kohkom scarf represents strength, empowerment, resilience amongst our people. Mr. Speaker, these scarves date back to the late 19th century in Saskatchewan — thank you —back when the Ukrainian immigrants settled in the prairies and developed relationships and trades with my ancestors, the first peoples. So those were tough days, tough times in those days. And everyone had to share resources to survive. The Indigenous people of the prairies helped the Ukrainian people, and it was reciprocated.

As a little girl, I would see my kohkom — and in my language, nôkomihs — wear a scarf similar to this around her head. And I would see my aunties wear them. And I didn't understand as a kid; I just knew that was important to my people. And now as a kohkom myself, I wear these scarves to take my place as a matriarch to honour those kohkom who came before me and to acknowledge the relationship between my ancestors and the Ukrainian people who immigrated here.

You know, hearing all about the news, it's been heartbreaking. And feeling powerless. And as a mother, as a grandmother, seeing parents hiding their babies and being fearful of their lives. My heart goes out to my Ukrainian brothers and sisters, and offer prayers. In my community back home, at the ceremonies our elders have offered prayers to the Ukrainian people. And I'm so grateful that . . . That's all that we can do. So, Mr. Speaker, I am in support of the motion that is presented before us, and I do offer prayers again for our Ukrainian brothers and sisters. gichimiigwech.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to have the opportunity to speak to our government's motion regarding our support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. My comments will be brief, but I felt it important to speak to this motion really because of the large Ukrainian diaspora in The Battlefords and in the northwest corner of this province.

And as a province, we are better because of the Ukrainian people who have adopted Saskatchewan as their new home. And I can say with great certainty The Battlefords are a better community because of the countless Ukrainians and those with Ukrainian heritage who work and who play and who volunteer and who contribute in our community.

Now let me start by saying this evening that the actions of the Russian government, the Russian military, and Vladimir Putin were unprovoked, and we categorically condemn them. This invasion threatens democracy and freedom in Ukraine. It threatens democracy and freedom in Europe. And it emboldens other authoritarian dictators around the world. And as a democratic and free nation, and as the province of Saskatchewan, we must stand with Ukraine.

Now over the last two weekends, I have had the opportunity to attend a couple of rallies in support of Ukraine, first in Saskatoon and then in North Battleford just this last weekend. And it was truly an emotional moment, Mr. Speaker, to stand in Saskatoon a couple of weekends ago and hear the Ukrainian national anthem being sung, and then the whole crowd singing "O Canada" together. What a moment. And for me, what a reminder of the blessing it is to live in Canada and to live here in Saskatchewan.

This last weekend in The Battlefords, it was moving to hear from many of our community members who have family and friends in Ukraine right now and living in the realities of war and doing their best to navigate a daily life that's filled with uncertainty. I think of a young man that I spoke with who had just recently immigrated to Saskatchewan and was new to The Battlefords. He talked about the city in Ukraine where his family still resides. It's currently surrounded by Russian forces, and his parents are unable to leave the city. I mean, imagine that. Your family on the other side of the world, living in that level of danger. And as a young person in Canada, those stories and the images that we witness every night on the evening news, they are unimaginable.

Now there has always been a special connection between Saskatchewan and the Ukrainian people, and we've heard much about that in this debate today. We were the first North American jurisdiction to recognize the Holodomor genocide, and there's a moving memorial to that just outside of this building here in Regina. And in fact at our local rally on Saturday, some of the Ukrainian community members talked about how Holodomor was the reason that their families originally left Ukraine and came to Canada.

Now turning our attention to the current conflict, you know, our provincial government has contributed financially to the humanitarian efforts. Through SaskTel we have waived charges to text and call loved ones in Ukraine. And again speaking to those in The Battlefords who have family members in Ukraine, that is so important in this current time. And as we continue to move forward through our Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program, we are prioritizing applications from Ukraine.

And as both the Premier and the Minister of Immigration and Career Training referenced today, our government is working with the federal government to streamline the different paths for any Ukrainian citizens to seek refuge here in Canada, whether temporarily or permanently. And here in Saskatchewan, we truly look forward to welcoming many more Ukrainians to this province.

So let me finish, Mr. Speaker. I stand with Ukraine. I stand with the Ukrainian people who are fighting for their sovereignty and freedom, and I will be supporting this motion tonight. Thank you.

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

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tonight I would like to join with my colleagues on both sides of the House to denounce this unprovoked invasion of a peaceful and democratic Ukraine. Like the member from The Battlefords was just stating, I too was at the rally in Saskatoon in support of Ukraine on February 27th. It was an incredible event. It was solemn but yet very, very powerful. And he was right. When the Ukrainian national anthem was sung followed by the Canadian national anthem, it was incredible.

Fifteen per cent of our province's population is of Ukrainian background. Ukraine is well represented in all of our cities, towns, villages, and in our rural areas. I spent part of my life in The Battlefords growing up, and many of my friends growing up are Ukrainian. Went to school, played sports, and worked alongside many of them. And more recently in my professional life as the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Martensville-Warman, I've gotten to know Warman's mayor, Gary Philipchuk, quite a bit better. Gary and his wife, Marilyn, are both proud Ukrainians, and I can't think of more exuberant and positive people in our city.

I just received a text message earlier this afternoon, and Gary and Marilyn have friends that are leaving Kyiv as we speak and Marilyn's family is in Western Ukraine. So they're in the process of inquiring about bringing their friends here as well. And that goes to show our government's resolve to bring as many of these people from Ukraine seeking refuge to Saskatchewan through the immigrant nomination program or whatever other means we need in order to accomplish this.

Like Gary and all other Canadians, my heart is very heavy watching what is happening to the millions of innocent people who have lost loved ones or are hunkered down just hoping to survive. Over 1.5 million Ukrainians have fled for safety of neighbouring countries as of yesterday, and many more are to come. Our province became home to tens of thousands of immigrants from Ukraine in our province's early days, and our government is again opening those doors and we want as many to come here for a new start and a promising future.

As Canadians it's incomprehensible, violent, unprovoked and unnecessary and beyond cruel what is happening in that country right now. And as Canadians we cannot tolerate the violence, the senseless actions that Putin and his regime are causing. That's why I'm standing today representing everybody in my constituency, Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians alike, and supporting the motion put forward by our government to condemn this unjustified and callous invasion of Ukraine by Putin and his military advisors. Slava Ukraini. Glory to Ukraine.

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

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to join in the Chamber today in the debate on the bill brought forward by the Premier. I have the unique position, Mr. Speaker, of growing up in a Ukrainian town and being the only non-Ukrainian in it. Ituna was kind of my hometown. And you know, it's a very unique part of Saskatchewan and it was always referred to as entering the garlic curtain. It was a kind of a play on words of the iron curtain. And you know it took in a lot of towns: Ituna, Canora, Melville, Yorkton. A huge area of northeastern Saskatchewan was always referred to that .

One of my earliest memories of attending school was in kindergarten. So I'm off to kindergarten and all my friends are talking about Gido and Baba. And they go to their house and they bake and they play games and this is just great. So after school I'm talking to my mom and I'm like, how come everybody knows Gido and Baba, but I don't? Like, I want to meet them; they sound like great people. So then my mother explained, well that's grandma and grandpa in Ukrainian and that doesn't really, you know, affect you.

So many schools have a secondary language in their schools, and in Ituna, Ukrainian was the second language taught there. So there was a lot of my friends that were very fluent in it. And it's really surprising in that section of Saskatchewan, of people that I interact with, since Ukraine became a democracy, the amount of tourism that went on there. Like, there was a pile of people went back to Ukraine, you know, they traced their family tree, they met their cousins and it was, you know, a really great set-up.

[19:15]

You know, I want to thank the government and the Premier for the \$100,000 of humanitarian donations. That was great to see. I want to thank the Minister of Immigration for all his hard work. My office has literally been flooded with people telling me, I got a farmhouse that's sitting vacant right now and we could take a family or refugees or anything. And you know, we have an apartment that's empty. And a lot of people would take them into their own homes. And just a huge groundswell of people wanting to help, not knowing how to help. But you know, wanting to do something.

You know, I want to thank the Minister of Crown Investments. The calls and texts. Tons of people have said that that has been, you know, really a positive move forward and has worked out really well. You know, it's funny, you watch the news and you ... I always kind of look in the background, and the Ukrainian people are very well dressed; everyone's got a cell phone. You know, they're actually a fairly wealthy nation.

It's very important to commend the member from Canora-Pelly. I mean, he was awarded a largely ceremonial role and all of a sudden with the war and the invasion, he's been thrust into a pile of work and he's really, really handling himself well and really making the government look very well.

So I've been thinking about this, Mr. Speaker. What more could we do? What more can I do? What more can we do? And I've really thought about this, and there is something we can do educate. We have to educate all of Canada and we have to be able to get our energy products to port. We have to educate the globe on how well produced our energy products are, because we have to stop the funding of Vladimir Putin. There's an old saying that an army marches on its stomach, but in the modern era that we live in now, an army marches on its wallet. We have to creatively come up with a way to stop the funding of Vladimir Putin, stop his war machine, and stop his killing of innocent Ukrainian citizens.

It's very important to note, Mr. Speaker, that the Russian people are good people. This is a totalitarian regime; this is Vladimir Putin doing this. This is not the Russian people attacking Ukrainian people. They've lived harmoniously for generations. This is political figures doing political damage in a real war. So I really want to support the motion brought forward by this government, and slava Ukraini, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On June 7, 1927 at noon, my grandfather, Harry Skoropad, as a 23-year-old, stepped off the train in the town of Findlater, just 45 minutes to the west of here. He was all alone, having completed the arduous journey from the Ukraine.

Now his story is not unlike the story of thousands of Ukrainians, who many years ago travelled across the globe to make Saskatchewan home. Mr. Speaker, Grandpa Skoropad had only a couple of precious dollars in his pocket, no words of English in his mouth, a heart full of loneliness and a stomach full of worry, but he also had two hands eager to work and a head full of dreams.

He, like so many others from the Ukraine, had escaped civil unrest and economic hardship, left all family and all things familiar to seek a better life. Grandpa Skoropad immigrated to Saskatchewan to the promise of freedom and the promise of security, freedom to pursue a better quality of life, freedom to sink roots in a land ripe with opportunity, and freedom to raise a family in a democratic society. These were the desires of my grandfather nearly a century ago, and I would argue that these are the desires of the Ukrainian people living in that country now, a country that is unjustly shaken by war.

The Putin regime has placed under attack not only Ukraine but also the very virtues of our own Canadian society, that being democracy and freedom. Since the day Harry Skoropad last set foot on Ukrainian soil, its path — that being Ukraine's path towards freedom, self-determination, and democracy has been winding, often uphill and certainly treacherous at times. Theirs is a history too often marked by civil strife, tragedy, and war. Efforts to carefully construct roadways to democracy have been delayed and redesigned at times. Now in the face of the recent senseless Russian military invasion, this road to democracy is under attack and in jeopardy of being barricaded.

Whereas my grandfather's departure from his homeland was

driven by hope, today we find over a million and a half Ukrainians fleeing from hopelessness, fleeing from terror. This past Saturday evening I sat in our living room with my wife and boys, and we talked about what's taking place almost a half around the globe and what true bravery looks like. It was difficult for Noah and Sol to get their heads around what's taking place in the Ukraine and more importantly why.

Actually, Mr. Speaker, it's hard for me to get my head around the what and the why of the present situation. It is hard to imagine what that same Saturday night must have been like for so many desperate families in Ukraine. I struggle to think of the black blanket of helplessness that must be laid on so many at this time — the uncertainty, the fear. But amidst that fear there is courage. And the well-known phrase loosely goes, courage is not the absence of fear but the resolute belief that there is something more important than that fear.

That's why all sides of this Assembly must unite and show our commitment to the people of Ukraine, people standing with courage. To that end, Mr. Speaker, our Saskatchewan doors are open to an unlimited number of people fleeing the unprovoked Russian assault on Ukraine. We will continue to communicate with the federal government regarding our province's willingness and capacity to accept displaced Ukrainians right here.

Mr. Speaker, the wave of support for the people of Ukraine from my constituency of Arm River has been awe-inspiring. Over the weekend I received emails I never thought I would read. Constituents that are absolute strangers to the families fleeing have reached out with offers, offers of their own homes. It goes without saying that Ukrainians pushed from their country will be lovingly pulled into the homes of everyday Saskatchewan people. Here they will find welcoming, supportive communities, communities that will literally give the shirts off their backs to their newest neighbours coming from horrific circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing we know first-hand from the thousands of Ukrainians who have chosen to call Saskatchewan home is that of their perseverance through hardship. Perseverance was in the fabric that made Harry Skoropad; it is in the fabric of the almost 15 per cent of Saskatchewan residents who trace their ancestry to the Ukraine; and it is the fabric of approximately 41 million Ukrainians now struggling against Vladimir Putin and his regime.

Reflecting this weekend, I was struck by the simple words of H. Jackson Brown who fittingly stated, "In the confrontation between the stream and the rock, the stream always wins — not through strength but through perseverance." Saskatchewan stands with the rest of the world in its condemnation of Russia's unprovoked war in Ukraine, and Saskatchewan will stand with the people of Ukraine as they persevere.

With that, Mr. Speaker, as so many members have done so before me already, I strongly support the motion put forth by our Premier. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I rise here

tonight, as we rise here tonight in full support of the motion here in the Saskatchewan legislature on Treaty 4 territory, atrocities are being committed in Ukraine. Bombs are being dropped. Civilian infrastructure and peoples' lives are being targeted by an unprovoked, horrible invasion by Putin and his regime. Children and families have been torn apart. Lives have been lost. Those that just a couple weeks ago might have served as farmers and labourers and teachers and lawyers and health care workers and nurses are in many cases now pressed into standing up for their country, pressed into taking up arms, pressed into joining the voluntary forces, standing there with President Zelenskyy and those forces.

And, Mr. Speaker, may I say it's been a remarkable display of courage and an inspiration to our world to observe the Ukrainian people fighting back for their sovereignty against Putin's horrible actions. We're dealing with actions that are criminal. We're watching war crimes being committed before us, observing it on the news and trying to fathom what we're seeing, taking time to digest this most unsettling of images that we're seeing. The promise was that we weren't supposed to be dealing with this sort of an invasion. The promise was that this sort of peace wasn't to be broken again in our lifetimes, or ever again. Now my grandfather who served said he served and the Canadian Forces served and the world served so that we wouldn't need to have war like this ever again. We stand united here in Saskatchewan and we stand in full support of this motion.

I also want to recognize the incredible Ukrainian-Canadian leaders that are leading day in, day out during these times, providing care, providing support, and that are on the ready in organizing the resources for the settlement of refugees, to make sure that we can offer that place of peace to these folks that deserve it so very much. I want to give thanks to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and all of the cultural associations and organizations that have been coming together, that make Saskatchewan strong each and every day, and that have been doing so for generations. But I want to pay tribute to them right now.

And I want to pay tribute to all those good folks, those included, that led the way to have organized two rallies in the past week, the last being held on Thursday of last week, incredibly well attended on an incredibly cold winter's evening. I want to recognize Anastasiia Sheichuk who's been organizing on the ground, the grassroots, and providing supports and calls for action here in Saskatchewan.

We've laid out a range of other measures to stand up to Putin and his regime, levers that we can utilize as a province and a country, and we're ready to work united with this government on those fronts. This isn't a time for political divisions, not a time for partisan politics. It's a time for us to stand united. It's this simple. It's about right versus wrong, good versus evil. And we will stand united with the people of Ukraine, and we'll stand in full support with Ukrainian Canadians.

We've offered some areas to which we can strengthen some of the measures that Saskatchewan is offering. Importantly, I want to recognize and to work with government around the call to settle Ukrainian refugees here in Saskatchewan. An unlimited number is the word we've heard from government, and this is an important thing. Of course we need to make sure the settlement supports are there for the organizations that are there to ensure the successful settlement as well.

I also want to echo the call of the Leader of the Opposition for the province to match donations to the Canada-Ukraine Foundation. They have a target of \$5 million to be deployed directly to the aid of Ukraine and to support Ukrainian people. And I echo that call as well. You've heard that from members here tonight.

And of course we need to do all we can to cripple Putin's ability to fund this war, to fund his invasion. And certainly as we've called for, we're in full support of making sure we expand into export markets of Russia. We have food, we have fuel, we have fertilizer that the world needs, and we need to make sure we're accessing those markets and putting the squeeze on Putin's regime, on the funding for Putin's regime.

Mr. Speaker, it's a horrible thing that the world is witnessing. It's a dark day for our world, and it's a horribly dark and stressful day for so many Saskatchewan people, so many Ukrainian Canadians.

[19:30]

But in this Assembly tonight, let it be recorded that the two sides of this Assembly, that all people within this Assembly, stood united and voted — as I hope and as I'm sure we will tonight unanimously in support of the people of Ukraine. Long live Ukraine. Glory to Ukraine. Slava Ukraine.

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

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today in support of the motion put forward by our Premier. When I first heard the devastating news of what was happening in Ukraine, my heart instantly went out to their citizens. My thoughts went back to when my own parents were in the similar position and had to abandon their homes, like many are now doing in Ukraine, during the partition of India.

Mr. Speaker, in August of 1947, after 200 years in India, the British left and the subcontinent was suddenly partitioned into two independent nations: Hindu-majority India and Muslimmajority Pakistan. Immediately there began one of the greatest migrations in human history as millions of Muslims trekked to West Pakistan and East Pakistan, now known as Bangladesh, while millions of Hindus and Sikhs headed in the opposite direction. My parents and grandparents, like others, had to quickly grab their most important possessions, pack them onto bullock carts and started the walk to find a new place to live, leaving everything they knew and had behind them. Mr. Speaker, many hundreds of thousands never made it.

I can completely relate to how the citizens of Ukraine must be feeling and fearing now, how desperate they must be as Russian forces are bombing city centres, prompting a mass evacuation of refugees trying to escape as Russia launches a devastating attack by air, land, and sea on Ukraine, a European democracy of 44 million people. This onslaught has forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee across Ukraine's borders. Poland, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, and Slovakia have seen a huge influx while the European Union suggests more than 7 million people could be displaced.

Mr. Speaker, here in Canada we ask, how could this happen? Late last year in 2021, while the world focused on managing the COVID pandemic, the Russian government began deploying troops close to Ukraine's borders while repeatedly denying they were going to attack. Then Vladimir Putin scrapped the 2015 peace deal for the east and recognized areas under rebel control as independent. He then began sending forces into Ukraine's north, east, and south. I can only imagine the horrific fear they must feel as bombs rain down on their cities and they have no choice but to rush into Cold War-era bomb shelters.

Sadly, thousands have died already, both civilians and soldiers. This invasion has caused the Ukrainian refugee crisis, Europe's largest refugee crisis since World War II. In just the first week, more than 1 million people have fled Ukraine. Mr. Speaker, looking at today's news, this has now climbed to 1.7 million.

The non-stop shelling attack continues to prevent the evacuation of civilians from besieged cities. Despite Russia's proposal to create safe escape routes out of Kyiv, Mariupol', Sumy, and Kharkiv, it was then uncovered that many of the routes would only take the Ukraine civilians to Russia or its ally, Belarus.

Tens of thousands of civilians remain trapped without power and with little access to food and water in the large port city of Mariupol'. Two attempts to evacuate them on the weekend collapsed after planned ceasefires failed to materialize. With the most recent attack on Irpin', just half an hour away from the capital city of Kyiv, people are still in the streets fighting to save their country.

The rest are travelling by foot with mothers cradling their babies, children clutching their toys, and the elderly trying to keep up, some not able to hold back the tears. This is the never-ending outpouring of people attempting to outrun the bombs falling from the sky, breaking their homes into rubble. Generations spent building, gone in seconds.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to opening our doors to these people and are working with the Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations advisory committee and service providers. We are also offering support such as waiving long-distance and text-message charges from Canada to Ukraine for SaskTel customers and roaming charges for those in Ukraine; raising Ukraine's flag which will continue to fly indefinitely outside the Legislative Building; financially supporting humanitarian efforts in Ukraine; providing administrative support to the Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations advisory committee through their government liaison and Intergovernmental Affairs; working with post-secondary institutions to determine the impact on international students and potential supports.

The Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority are delisting Russian products from its distribution centre and retail stores and providing mental health resources for employees and eligible family members.

We are also working closely with the federal government to coordinate our efforts to help displaced Ukrainians. The federal government has announced two new immigration streams for Ukrainians who want to come to Canada: the Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel is the fastest and most efficient option; and the special family reunification sponsorship pathway for permanent residents for immediate and extended family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

We fully support these actions by our federal government and hope they will result in more Ukrainians being able to resettle in Saskatchewan. To help expedite the application process for Ukrainian families wishing to come to Saskatchewan, we will utilize the existing Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to live in a community that helps not only its neighbours but those in need around the world. Our province continues to do an outstanding job raising funds to support Ukraine. The Rawlco Radio Saskatchewan Day of Caring for Ukraine last Thursday was a great success. In just half of a day, the people of Saskatchewan pulled together and donated over a million dollars to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and those still in Ukraine.

The money raised will provide immediate aid to purchase food, medicine, and shelter for agencies helping refugees and people in Ukraine. On the same day the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Regina branch, also held a peaceful rally to show support for Ukraine. It was my honour to stand with them that evening.

Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of supporters, the Canadian Red Cross has already met its goal and the Government of Canada has matched their donations of 10 million to the Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis Appeal. The Canada-Ukraine Foundation, the Red Cross, and UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund] are all still accepting donations.

With all that we are doing, I still wish that we could do more. Let's all pray for the safety and well-being for the millions of Ukrainian peace-loving citizens. May God bless them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very grateful this evening to enter into the debate on this emergency motion — a very important emergency motion that many have talked about — and again proud to represent the people of Regina Gardiner Park as we talk about it this evening.

Mr. Speaker, of course, I haven't seen anything I don't think in my life as pointless. And you know, we've heard from the Russian dictator about some of the — I use in air quotes reasons for invading a free and democratic country unprovoked. But they seem to get more specious every time one of the excuses comes out of his mouth, Mr. Speaker.

There's been massive disruption, of course — as we all have seen on TV — in people's lives. Children, women having to exit the country, and their husbands having to turn right back around and join the fight readily. Mr. Speaker, this is just the latest heartbreaking chapter in a very difficult past for the people of Ukraine and Eastern Europe in general over the years, as others have pointed out. I won't go into great detail on that, Mr. Speaker. 1650

I have a Ukrainian background on my dad's side. My tato and my dido was a Makowsky; my baba was a Yaholnitsky. and they had four children. The three boys were named . . . My dad's name is Boris; and then came Metro, or he's known as Mitch; and then last was Orest. So you can tell all the Ukrainian baby names from the 1940s, I think, were represented in our family, Mr. Speaker.

But of course they, just like so many families in that era, they started with nothing, were farmers for years and years and years. My uncle still farms the original homestead land. So it's backbreaking labour for decades and decades — literally for my dad. He fell off a baler when he was a teenager and broke his back. And so very dangerous work over the years, Mr. Speaker, with primitive equipment as they've gone.

But my dido in particular, farming was his occupation. His passion was the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in which he loved to sing. He sang in the area of Canora-Pelly for decades and decades, and I can't tell you how many countless hours he spent doing that, back and forth across grid roads. And I appreciate the member from Kelvington-Wadena talking about the Ukrainian churches that scattered rural Saskatchewan and still do. And the Mazeppa church was their home church. It's not in a town; it's at the confluence of two grid roads south of Mikado, Saskatchewan. And it's still there. And of course there's people that work tirelessly to just keep it open and keep 'er going to this day.

So that's the kind of people . . . And that's not my family; that's thousands of families right across our province. That is what they did. And that's what builds communities, that's what builds a province, that strong, hard work. And that agriculture industry is still the backbone of this province to this day.

Mr. Speaker, the Ukrainian people, my experience all throughout my life is they're a people of character. They're resolute. They're stoic. They're proud. They're salt of the earth. My grandparents were just hard-working, simple — I don't know if it's the right word — but uncomplicated and just got the job done time after time.

And I think we're seeing that now over in the Ukraine, people that ... There's a strong army of Ukrainian people, a regular infantry. But there's people that were teachers a couple of weeks ago or whatever. Politicians are stepping up, and you see images of them grabbing guns and grabbing bullets out of a big bag or whatever it is, Mr. Speaker. So we're seeing those characteristics on the battlefield, Mr. Speaker. There is a saying, "Heroyam slava." "Glory, glory to the heroes," Mr. Speaker. We're seeing that every day over there now.

So I'm very thankful, Mr. Speaker, what's happening here in Saskatchewan, a small part. When we come together, when all these elected officials are having this debate tonight with unanimous support, I think it builds voices, and that is important to send over to those freedom fighters in Ukraine.

I'm thankful for the million dollars that has been raised here in Saskatchewan in short order. I'm thankful for the sanctions from Western countries all over the world, Mr. Speaker, the neighbouring countries around Ukraine for taking refugees. And there's millions of those anticipated. I thank you for the UCC [Ukrainian Canadian Congress], the work they do; SURAC [Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations advisory committee]. And the member from Canora-Pelly, Mr. Speaker, the Legislative Secretary mentioned Jim Shevchuk, and boy, that brought back great memories — one of the best people around and a community builder. And I thought that was interesting. It really took me back.

[19:45]

But Mr. Speaker, the dictator, Vladimir Putin, I think he made some assumptions that were a big mistake on his side. I think he woke up one day and he thought it was 1960 or maybe 1930. And he's using those policies from those days in a modern context. And as I said before — I don't know if that's right — ridiculous, pointless, shameful, on and on it goes, Mr. Speaker.

But I think he's making those assumptions that — like those old ideas, power and war machines, etc. — controlling a population leads to power and might and wealth. But that's not the case anymore, Mr. Speaker. It's innovation. It's education, Mr. Speaker. Freedom. Ideas. And you don't interrupt those, and you can't kill those things with a tank or bullets. You just can't. And we're seeing that every day, Mr. Speaker. And the other thing he thought, I think, was that Ukraine would just lay down and make it easy, and that's not the case. That's not the case, Mr. Speaker.

And so it's created a long-term disaster . . . Well hopefully not. Hopefully common sense prevails, but we've seen when large powers come into areas that aren't willing, it's just a long-term disaster. So we hope common sense prevails, Mr. Speaker.

But my time is up, and I appreciate the opportunity as always to stand in this beautiful House of democracy and, you know, debate things the way they should be in my opinion. So the last thing I'll say: slava Ukraini. Glory for Ukraine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start off by publicly denouncing the actions initiated by President Putin of Russia with respect to the cruel, vicious, and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. This is not only an attack on Ukraine, but an attack of the values of democracy, freedom, and self-determination. This government condemns the invasion of Ukraine and stands by them and the rest of the world in supporting the people.

Our government is providing support and are ensuring our doors are open for those who choose to flee Ukraine to a safe and welcoming environment like Saskatchewan. We have already committed to donating \$100,000 to support humanitarian efforts and are providing administrative support through the government liaison and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, my personal memories of the annual Malanka just solidifies the fact that many parts of Saskatchewan are deeply embedded with Ukrainian culture and traditions. Approximately 15 per cent of our province's residents trace all or part of their ancestry to Ukraine. Mr. Speaker, my wife, Noella, is of partial Ukrainian descent as her mother was a very strong Ukrainian. When I first met her 34 years ago, we used to participate in the annual Malanka Ukrainian New Year's Eve celebrations in her hometown of Wakaw. There was always Ukrainian heritage dancing to start off the evening with many participants of all ages partaking and contributing to the New Year's Eve celebrations. I will always remember how entertaining and special those celebrations were with all of the traditions of special clothing attire and Ukrainian dancing, with the highlight being the kolomiyka dance. And of course I can't forget about all the tasty and traditional Ukrainian food of perogies, holubtsi, and the traditional wheat dish which brought a little bit of Ukraine into Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to pay back our debt to the generations of Ukrainians that have helped to build our province. At this time, over 1 million Ukrainians have been forced to flee, a number that is sure to rise in the coming weeks and months ahead. In response to this, the federal government has announced two new immigration streams for Ukrainians who want to come to Canada. The Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel is the fastest and most efficient option. The special family reunification sponsorship pathway for permanent residents for immediate and extended family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents is another option.

The federal government has our full support in these actions and gives hope that Ukrainians will be able to resettle within the province of Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program will continue to be used as well. This program has been very successful at bringing Ukrainian citizens to our province. Over the course of the last five years nearly 300 Ukrainians have arrived into the province of Saskatchewan through this program. Any applications received from Ukrainian citizens will be prioritized.

Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan has always been so very welcoming, and this current situation would be no different. Ukrainians who choose to come to this province will find a welcoming environment, supportive communities, and many others that share their culture and speak their language. A great example of this was a constituent who reached out to my office just the other day. Cory Rewerts, who is a constituent from the Cut Knife area, contacted our office offering assistance by way of taking in a Ukrainian family in order to help in any possible way. Gestures such as these will assist in ensuring that Saskatchewan becomes their forever home, as I know these types of kind gestures are happening throughout the province.

The Government of Saskatchewan has a well-developed network of services and providers from around the province who are experienced and well-positioned to provide settlement supports and services to help Ukraine newcomers gain the language, skills, and connections they need to successfully integrate into our communities and workforce sectors. Our government will continue to work closely with the business community and employers who want to help recently arrived Ukrainians by offering them employment. In addition, community groups who are interested in helping have the option of contacting their nearest immigrant-serving agency.

It is time once again, Mr. Speaker, to convene a meeting with the provincial and territorial ministers to develop a pan-Canadian plan for Ukrainian settlement. This was done in 2015 regarding the settlement of Syrian refugees, and it needs to be done again.

The Government of Saskatchewan supports the sanctions imposed by the federal government as well as other countries from around the world, Mr. Speaker. We support the federal government in banning oil imports from Russia and imposing immediate and severe trade sanctions. As newcomers are welcomed from Ukraine in the coming weeks ahead, we will continue working with partners in settlement services and the business community to ensure all necessary supports are in place.

Mr. Speaker, it is encouraged that donations and humanitarian efforts from the public be made to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress or through the Canadian Red Cross in which the Government of Canada is matching donations between February 24th and March 18th of 2022, up to a maximum of \$10 million. To show our ongoing support, Ukraine's flag will continue to fly indefinitely outside of this Legislative Building.

Mr. Speaker, we stand together for Ukraine, and I stand in support of the motion today. Thank you.

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

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for this opportunity to weigh in on this motion which I will certainly be supporting as we go through the night here.

What we're seeing in the world right now is nothing short of senseless, heinous crimes being imposed on Ukrainian people. One man is to blame for this and one man alone, Vladimir Putin and his dictator regime of Russia. We're watching this play out in real time. And I think back to a time when the Gulf War was on in 1991, and I remember watching on CNN [Cable News Network]. And you'd hear the reports of that war going on and thinking, how could this actually happen in our world in this day and time?

Well fast-forward 30 years, now we're watching it on our cell phones. We're watching it on social media feeds. We're seeing it on the news every night and in the newspapers, once again being faced by a tyrannical dictator who thinks he knows better, who thinks he knows what's right. And he's not. He's wrong. We've seen it all through history. Back to the times of the Romans, all the way up through the middle ages, to World Wars I and II, and now here again in Ukraine. Vladimir Putin has an idea that will not work. And history has shown that it will not work.

Ukrainian people are inspiring everyone — everyone in this House, everyone around the world. People are coming together to say no, this is not right. We will not stand for this. President Zelenskyy has been a beacon of hope for democracy and for what's right and wrong in this world.

I think back to the early days of our province, even before that, how integral a part Ukrainian people have been in settling, in growing, and in pushing our province further ahead for the better. Thirteen per cent of people in Saskatchewan can trace their roots back to Ukraine. In the last 15 years, over 4,000 Ukrainians have immigrated to Saskatchewan to make our province a better, more diverse, more fruitful province. Myself, I'm not Ukrainian. My partner's grandma — very much Ukrainian. And if there's many things I've learned from her is a sense of humour, a sense of hard work, a sense of perseverance, and a sense of pride. And that's what we're seeing right now in the Ukraine. That's what we're seeing right now, right here in our own province, whether it be the pins on members' lapels, whether it be the flags in this House, or whether it be a rally outside last Thursday where hundreds of people came. Stories were shared by members of this Assembly, by members of the local community, and the support there was overwhelming.

We need to continue that support. Our government is there, and we're going to continue that support, be it monetarily, be it through things like SaskTel waiving fees, whether it be opening up our doors to welcome in people from the Ukraine. We saw it last Thursday as well with the Rawlco Day of Caring, over a million dollars raised in just 12 hours in this province. The support shown, the love shown, and the financial capacity to help the humanitarian crisis going on right now.

I think of people like Kathy from Walsh Acres who reaches out to me and says, what can I get to help welcome people from the Ukraine when they come here? Do you have any Saskatchewan pins? Do you have anything so we can make them feel at home as quickly as possible because this is their new home?

I think about the students of a high school doing the same thing, wanting to be a part of welcoming these people to a freer, safer, better life than what is being imposed on them by Vladimir Putin right now. Or Kim who contacted me the very first day that Russia, unprovoked, invaded Ukraine, and said, I have rooms at my house. How do I get in touch with somebody to welcome some Ukrainian people here into my own home?

And that's the Saskatchewan spirit. It's the Saskatchewan spirit that's grown here for well over a century. We get that because we are from many peoples, strength. And many of those people are of Ukrainian descent. They've come here from the Ukraine and they've contributed to the strength of our province. And now it's our time to step up and be strong for them.

I am very pleased to hear that, you know, all the members of this House are going to support this motion. And I just want to touch on the way this motion is written and it means, I think, some great significance, that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan express its unwavering support for Ukraine's people. First and foremost, we need to be there for the people of Ukraine, to support their sovereignty, their territorial integrity. And we need to condemn Russia's wholly unprovoked and wanton invasion of Ukraine and call on them to cease and withdraw all military options within the Ukraine immediately. We are here for the people of Ukraine and we absolutely — and I absolutely categorically condemn Vladimir Putin and the Russian invasion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great and a sombre privilege and with a heavy heart that I enter into this emergency debate this evening in support of the motion before us expressing our unwavering support for Ukraine's people, their sovereignty, and territorial integrity, condemning Russia's

wanton invasion of Ukraine, and calling on Russia to cease and withdraw all military operations within Ukraine immediately.

Listening to speakers from both sides of the House share their stories of connections with Ukraine is humbling. I'm reminded of our shared humanity, our common interests as fellow Canadians to live in a free and fair democracy. For most of us, that means free from persecution, free to pursue our dreams, and free of the threat of invasion from neighbouring countries.

[20:00]

I want to thank the member from Saskatoon Centre who shared with us the history and the importance of the kohkoms' Ukrainian scarves to her culture and their close link with the immigrant women whose relationships they symbolize. It reminds me that we are all connected through time and space, through the land that we all share and the histories of our people.

It reminds me of a song a primary school teacher used to lead us in when I was a young schoolgirl. It was called "One Tin Soldier." Does anyone remember that song? It tells a story of two warring people fighting to gain control of this mountain. And when the people of the valley fight their adversaries to the death and reach the summit, they turn the stone and look beneath it. Peace on earth, is all it said.

One wonders why, after so many atrocities stemming from around the world, including two world wars, that such lessons can be so hard to understand.

Now I'm not so naive to be unaware of the complex geopolitical events antecedent to this crisis. But let us not forget that right before Russia invaded Ukraine, Canada was experiencing its own democratic crisis with the occupation of Ottawa by protestors opposing federal and provincial epidemiological restrictions in response to a global pandemic.

And I don't bring it up to debate that unfortunate event, but simply to point out the stark contrast between what is occurring in Ukraine with what is being alleged in terms of infringement on rights of Canadian citizens and the social contract under which we enjoy — and even at some times take for granted — our freedoms as a democratic society.

I think we're all interested in raising the level of respectful debate in the legislature. But I cannot allow it to go unmentioned that our Premier was unwilling to take a decisive stand on the conduct of protestors in Ottawa, who are now facing criminal prosecution, for his own political gain and so as not to offend radical extremists within his own party.

The events taking place in Ukraine stand in stark contrast to that, where democratic freedoms are truly in great peril. Watching the events unfold in Ukraine, the situation is devastating. And we've heard many stories here today on the personal connections members of this legislature have with Ukrainian citizens sheltering in bunkers in Kyiv, in Sumy, in Mariupol', and elsewhere.

Two weeks ago, the Saskatchewan NDP [New Democratic Party] provincial council unanimously passed an emergency resolution to fully support and stand in solidarity with the people of

Ukraine. In the days following the Russian invasion, the Leader of the Official Opposition wrote a letter to our Premier calling for unity and collaboration through the Saskatchewan-Ukrainian relations advisory committee to include all members of the Legislative Assembly to facilitate the work to support those impacted by the crisis, the settlement of refugees, and coordinate needed financial and humanitarian support. So far that request has gone unanswered.

As I've said, so many of us are personally touched by these tragic events. I had the great privilege to travel to Ukraine in the summer of 2019 as an election observer in the parliamentary elections following President Zelenskyy's inauguration that same year. I was part of a delegation of 850 observers from more than 40 countries, including almost 200 Canadian volunteers and including many who participated through the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. The mission was organized by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, which is an arm of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

What an incredible opportunity to travel to a part of Europe with such a rich history, integral to the settlement of Western Canada, including my own grandparents and great-grandparents. As a second- and third-generation Polish Canadian, it was thrilling to imagine what life must have been like for my ancestors as peasants from small farming communities, surviving the many war conflicts that had touched that region through the centuries, juxtaposed with the emerging modern democratic society observed until only just recently in Ukraine.

It hits me with great impact to realize the important work I had the privilege to be a part of through that election observation mission — to ensure free and fair elections in this emergent democracy since the collapse of the former Soviet Union.

Last week I made contact with my translator in the city of Sumy in eastern Ukraine, 40 miles from the border with Russia, to ensure hers and her family's safety. Thankfully they were safe thus far, although their city has been seized and they live under control of authoritarian rule. I think of the beautiful city of Kyiv, where I was stationed briefly in all its magnificence; of the Maidan uprising in 2014; and my heart aches for people who only want to possess their sovereignty as a free, democratic society and is now a city facing ruin.

Ukraine is ethnically diverse. My maternal grandfather, Marian Kroczynski, of mixed Polish-Ukrainian ethnic heritage, was born in the town of Kopychyntsi, a town located in the Ternopil Oblast near the border with Poland. This is a part of Europe that has changed hands throughout the centuries. At the time of my grandfather's birth, it was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. He immigrated to Canada in the 1920s, met and married my grandmother, Miriam Swiderski, of Polish descent and part of a larger Polish-Ukrainian diaspora in the area near Ituna and Rama, with family names like Karkut and Malinowski. My grandparents lived a long and prosperous life here in Saskatchewan with many grandchildren and great-grandchildren, seeing their four children prosper, each receiving university educations, their dreams realized.

To this day my mother, Eleanor Ritchie, maintains strong ties with her Ukrainian-Polish cousins back in the old country. Last week we learned that my relatives who live outside Lviv near the border of with Poland, and whom I only know distantly, are fine but a young nephew who recently turned 18 is waiting to be called up to serve. As a mother with a young adult son, my heart aches for them especially. The residents of Kopychyntsi today are mobilizing to provide supplies for both soldiers fighting Russian forces and people fleeing for their lives. And so it touches me personally, as it does all of us, as we think of our fellow men and women, the young and old, experiencing this tragedy from one end of Ukraine to the other.

The people of Saskatoon Nutana, like all constituencies across this great province, have deep and lasting ties with the people of Ukraine. I think in gratitude of retired scholar and professor emeritus Bohdan Kordan, of Ukrainian descent, who founded the Prairie Centre for the Study of Ukrainian Heritage. Now I think of the many families throughout Saskatchewan who are touched by these tragic events. How lucky we are to live in this great country, so many of us descendants of settlers from foreign countries fleeing poverty and persecution. And how fortunate we are to be able to live in relative prosperity, sharing this land as treaty people in a relationship that we are only now beginning to reconcile through the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] Calls to Action.

As the events of the past month here in Canada have demonstrated so clearly, democracy is fragile. It takes work, and it should never be taken for granted. As we come together to express our solidarity with Ukraine and pray for peace, and the spirit of a nation so bravely embodied in their leader, President Zelenskyy, let us not forget that we are all one in this humanitarian project of building a fair and just and democratic world.

It's encouraging to see the people of Saskatchewan come together to provide humanitarian relief and support for refugees. That is the true spirit of a people who come together, "from many peoples, strengths." This is not a time for political divisions or partisan politics. At times like these, we must be united in our full support for the people of Ukraine. We should be using every tool at our disposal to maximize pressure on the Russian government to peacefully exit Ukraine, and that includes leveraging our trade offices, trade missions, and organizations to pressure countries relying on Russian potash, grains, and energy, to hamstring Putin's ability to finance this invasion. We should continue to call on the federal government to expedite visa applications for those fleeing Ukraine, and I welcome the efforts made thus far to increase supports for refugee resettlement.

Saskatchewan can play a key role in raising funds with the Canada-Ukraine Foundation by matching donations to help them reach their goal of \$5 million to provide assistance to Ukrainians in need and to address any further aggression by Russia. Let's continue to work together and show our support for the humanitarian efforts in Ukraine, support their defence, and do all we can to bring an end to this brutal invasion as quickly as possible and without further human loss and destruction. Slava Ukraine.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to stand this evening and to join with colleagues from both sides as we

send one unified message, and I am proud to do that as a whole Assembly today. I'm proud that we can stand together, and as a member of this Assembly, I can agree that I am here to offer my unwavering support for Ukraine's people and sovereignty and its territorial integrity. And I'm proud that we can agree as one voice that this Assembly condemns Russia's unprovoked, violent invasion of Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to keep my remarks fairly brief this evening, and I'd like to just focus on why I'll be supporting this motion put forward by the Premier. It comes down to two reasons. First reason, I believe that this motion aligns with the wishes of the people that I represent in Saskatoon Eastview, and I'll go into more detail on that. And the second is due to more personal reasons and connections that many of us have shared.

I spent two summers in Western Ukraine, four months in total, living with a family there and engaging in different types of work. And I have had the opportunity to check in on friends, people that I care deeply about in the country, and I'm deeply concerned for them and their nation.

[20:15]

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the people of Saskatoon Eastview, there's a couple of things I'd like to point to. First of all, on the day that Russian aggression began, I was in contact with a friend of mine who's a pastor. His congregation is not in Eastview; it's Ebenezer Baptist Church in Saskatoon. And together with my colleague from Nutana, we went to that church that evening and we joined with members of the congregation in prayer, quiet contemplation because they have a Ukrainian church that meets in their building.

And you know, to be honest there was time for prayer that evening, but there was also time for listening to stories. And we were talking to a couple. They moved to Canada about 12 years ago. They have adult children, but the rest of their family is still in Ukraine. And it was heartbreaking. You know, there were tears. There was a lot of emotion. There was a lot of fear and concern for what was happening and what was going to happen. And for these new friends of mine, they talked about some of the atrocities that took place in 2014 when Russian forces also invaded. The outcome was different, but the people of Ukraine know of those atrocities, and the concern of what was coming was palpable in the air as these folks shared with us that evening.

One other thing that I did today to check in with the folks that I represent is we have a church in Saskatoon Eastview. It's the All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox parish. They are neighbours of mine in Eastview. I don't live far from the church. I touched base with Father Peter there today. I asked him what he was hearing from the folks there at All Saints. He was hearing a couple things: first of all, the amount of organizing that's going on. We've heard tonight about the value of solidarity, standing together against injustice.

He was proud of the organizing that was going on. He pointed out a couple in particular, and maybe some of us have seen this in the news, but he was proud to work with and support the Stream of Hopes initiative in Saskatoon that is sending supplies right into Ukraine. It's an organization that has been in existence for years, but they're shifting their focus to supporting the safety and protection of Ukrainian citizens at this time.

But he also talked about, and this is what I wanted to bring to the Assembly tonight, he talked about the need to plan for the future. I'm hearing that expressed in the Assembly tonight and earlier today, but I want to echo these words from Father Peter. He said that we need to prepare for the displaced people, for when they arrive here. That preparation needs to be under way already. And I am pleased to hear a discussion about this. When we talk about opening our doors, we need to be planning for housing. We need to be planning for jobs. We need to be planning for all those settlement supports. And I want to reiterate to members opposite that we are 100 per cent committed and willing to work together to find solutions to these problems before those newcomers arrive in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the second reason why I'm supporting this motion is for more, you know, my own personal experience. And as I mentioned off the top I did spend two summers in Western Ukraine in a city called Uzhhorod. My reason for going there is a bit of a story, and I'll tell it quickly. I was a university student at the time. I was playing football. And a teammate of mine, his name is Josh, he's actually a teacher here in Regina. We had heard of this other guy. He had played for the Calgary Colts playing junior football, and he started a football team in Uzhhorod, and they're called the Uzhhorod Lumberjacks or Użhorodśki Lisoruby. And he was doing all the work himself. And we, without knowing too much, we did some fundraising. We hopped on a plane and we flew to Europe and made our way to Ukraine. Uzhhorod is on the border with Slovakia.

I spent two months there that summer, and then two months the following summer with a different teammate. And I can tell the Assembly that there's two words that I have to describe my experience with the people of Ukraine. Those two words would be warmth and generosity. We lived with a family that welcomed us in. They shared their small apartment with us. They fed us profusely. They took care of us. And the warmth and generosity of this family, I almost hesitate to say, was not unique in my experience in Ukraine. That was my experience everywhere.

At one point during my first summer there, I became very ill. And the mother of the family I was staying was, her name was Ludmila, she took one look at me — and she didn't speak much English; I didn't speak much Ukrainian at that point — and she put me in a taxi cab and took me to the hospital. I ended up getting treatment there from a doctor who could speak some English. And I'll tell you, the generosity and the care that I experienced was unbelievable. They didn't really have a need to do this. I think it was an act of, what I interpret as just an expression of the values of Ukrainian people.

One of the other things that we did in Ukraine, my teammate and I, we worked at an orphanage running summer camps. And although those conditions were at times heartbreaking, they were also uplifting, Mr. Speaker. Because these children who lived in the orphanage also expressed that same warmth and generosity to us, sharing what little they had with us, playing with us, breaking down the barriers that may have existed for a relationship to take place. And I believe that the warmth and generosity of Ukrainian people was on display.

Mr. Speaker, when I examine this motion and listen to my

colleagues on both sides, I believe this is a good motion to support because the people of Ukraine deserve our unwavering support. The people of Ukraine believe in democracy, Mr. Speaker. And I heard a member opposite say this. I'm not sure who it was, but I heard a member opposite talk about this attack, this unprovoked attack being an assault on democracy. And that's absolutely correct. This attack on Ukraine as an independent, sovereign nation is an attack on democracy. And we have to remember that the people of Ukraine have fought hard for decades for democracy in their country, that this fight, while it may be taking up arms now, fighting for democratic values is not new to the people of Ukraine.

When I was there, the president in power was President Kuchma. And President Kuchma would win elections with unreasonable levels of support because those elections were not free and they were not fair. And the people of Ukraine rejected those ideals for their own ideals. The Orange Revolution came along. People gathered in Khreshchatyk Street in Kyiv. And they fought for democracy, and they kept that fight going for 10 years.

It dawned on me earlier today that democracy is fragile. There is nothing that entitles us to these freedoms that we sometimes take for granted. And it also dawned on me today that it's actually quite an honour to serve in opposition, that is a distinct democratic freedom that doesn't exist everywhere. And I want to put on the record that I'm also inspired by those Russian citizens who, at great risk to their own freedom, are opposing the actions of their government, because those actions are wrong.

Mr. Speaker, with that I will conclude my remarks. I will voice my support for this motion, and I want to thank all members for engaging in this thoughtful conversation this evening. Slava Ukraini.

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

Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first and foremost I'd like to condemn Vladimir Putin and the unjust, unprovoked invasion of the Ukraine and ask them to cease this action and leave the Ukraine immediately. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to be able to voice my support for the motion. I'll keep my comments fairly brief, but I still think it's important to put comments on the record.

My wife is of Ukrainian heritage, Ukrainian-Polish heritage actually. She's from Ituna. Many solid Ukrainian people are from Ituna, as we know, as other members have spoken. It's behind the garlic curtain. And she's very much Ukrainian. I'm not of Ukrainian heritage, but I grew up in a Ukrainian community. And it's one of the few communities in Saskatchewan, probably the only community in Saskatchewan where the stop sign is actually even in Ukrainian. So it is very Ukrainian.

Most of my friends are, back then when I was growing up, were of Ukrainian decent, and we were close. My father was the grain buyer there, and I know we always spoke highly of all the Ukrainian families and the Ukrainian people there as being very hard-working people, compassionate people, salt-of-the-earth people. And we very much liked growing up in that community and living in that community. But the disturbing events, my wife and I watch on TV every day. We're watching and listening to that, and you know, it's 2022, and we just can't imagine how this could ever happen in this world in 2022. Have we not progressed further than the 1930s? Have we not progressed any further than that?

So it's just, you know, as we're watching, we have very different emotions. I mean, emotions from disgust at how these people, how Putin can bomb innocent children and people that are seniors, and they're just bombing indiscriminately residents. And how can they do that? And then we go feel that compassion for the Ukrainian people as we see them running on the street, as we see the bombs falling around them. And they're ducking for cover, where they're staying in subway stations, and them small babies, small people — the compassion that we feel there, yeah, it's incredible.

We fully support, I fully support, all the current sanctions that not only Canada but the world has placed on Russia and Belarus, because they are participants in this as well. And in fact we actually wish there was far more sanctions and continue with more strict sanctions.

My wife can't believe, and I know every day she says to me, how come we can't do more? She says, how can the world just stand there, stand by, and not do more? How can we not put a little more fist in it? How can we not be a little more aggressive instead of just sanctions? How can we just watch this happen and do nothing? Have we not learned anything? Have we not learned anything from history, or what happened in the '30s? How it started with one country and then it went to another and then it went to another and then it went to another, and we stood by and we did nothing until it was too late. So it's a tragic thing that's happening out there.

Last Thursday, I had the honour of attending a rally in Prince Albert. I got to speak at the rally, but I attended with the member from Prince Albert Northcote. And we went there and it was well attended. It was very cold, but it was well attended and the amount of people that were there waving placards and flags, and they got up to sing songs in Ukrainian — it was quite something. I got up and I spoke, and I said what the government was doing and how we condemn what's going on and how our government and this province — not only just us, but members opposite of us — we all will welcome all the immigrants or refugees or whatever we can. We'll do whatever we can to bring as many people over here as we can and welcome them with open arms. We'll be there, and I think we can all agree that we will all do that.

Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude. We do stand with Ukraine. Most importantly we stand with the people of Ukraine. And God bless Ukraine.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to join in this debate on this very important motion brought forward by the Premier. Obviously at the end of my comments I'll be supporting this motion wholeheartedly, as we here, I think, all members that are present in the Assembly.

Obviously my name is far from Ukrainian. I'm of German-

Austrian heritage. But my wife's family, the Wiwchars, Terleskys, they're obviously all Ukrainian, all from the Good Spirit Lake area, very close to my friend the member for Regina Dewdney's family. And, Mr. Speaker, after being a resident of Yorkton, I would argue more than 15 per cent of the residents of Yorkton would trace their heritage back to Ukraine. High number of Ukraine descendants there.

But, Mr. Speaker, living there for a better part of the last 52 years, just by the nature of being there and being immersed in the Ukrainian culture and the Ukrainian heritage and somewhat learning of Ukrainian history, I'm probably more in touch with Ukrainian history and background with my wife's family than my own German-Austrian heritage, Mr. Speaker. And you start getting quite an appreciation for it.

[20:30]

Well then fast-forward, I've been involved in that family and married to my wife, Leone, and the Wiwchars for a better part of 35, 36 years and a member of the family for 40 years. So being immersed in their culture through the family, that much closer through Christmas and Easter and a lot of the religious holidays and getting more of a gleaning of the history of their family, both sides of the family coming to Saskatchewan in the early 1900s. Again, more of an appreciation, more of an understanding of the history. A lot of the personal family history and stories really starts to take root in a person's mind and heart, Mr. Speaker.

And then, you know, getting elected, representing such a strong Ukrainian area, you know, you start maybe getting a little bit more understanding of the history, of course, going through school and all the rest of it.

Back in 2014 after the former member for Canora-Pelly, our deputy premier, retired, I was given the honour to become the Ukraine relations minister. It involved the SURAC, Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations advisory committee; Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Mr. Speaker, right in the midst of the triannual, right in the midst of their celebrating 125 years of Ukrainian immigration, of course the independence of Ukraine, the fall of the Iron Curtain and the breakdown of the USSR [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics], Mr. Speaker. And through that time getting to know former Ambassador Andriy Shevchenko, and right in that time was about when the Crimea invasion happened, and getting his insight of what was actually happening, where the world kind of downplayed, I think, largely what was happening in Crimea.

But even I remember back with Ambassador Shevchenko and his worries of what was happening. In fact I think a lot of what he foretold of or worried about back then, he was probably ahead of the curve of what was going to happen. But I remember him talking about this very situation, the possibility of it happening, back in 2014-15. And fast-forward again a couple of years ago, a few years back, getting to know the consul general, Oleksandr Danyleiko, now in Edmonton, Mr. Speaker, and having a lot of those stories and a lot of fears, you know, confirmed.

But, Mr. Speaker, as was told by many members of this Assembly today, I think Vladimir Putin and the Russian army really didn't know what they were biting off, Mr. Speaker. You know, the Ukrainian people, I've come to know them as loving, humble, but they're hard-working, they're resilient, they're determined.

Mr. Speaker, you know, in that time as the Ukrainian relations minister, one thing I really got involved with and it really struck me, was the recognition of Holodomor we have, as was pointed out, the statue just out along the Wascana. And one thing that always struck me looking at that statue was the age of that girl, Mr. Speaker. My mother-in-law, if she wouldn't have been in this country at that time, would've been the age of that girl. And I don't know what would've happened, like with their family, my wife, what her history would've been like. But, Mr. Speaker, that cuts to the core.

I think a lot of people on this side of the House, both sides of the House are talking about the direct connection not only to Ukraine in the current sense, in the historical sense but, Mr. Speaker, really, really grappling with what's happening and how we can all relate so closely to what's happening over there.

But again I don't think Vladimir Putin really thought it all the way through, as was pointed out by the other members about, you know, the '30s and '40s, what's happened in the past, and thinking maybe they'd roll right into Ukraine and take it over. I think a lot of Vladimir Putin's supporters probably thought the same thing. But a few little stories I've gotten . . . immigrants, very recent immigrants to Yorkton have been relaying film and text messages from their family back in Ukraine, fighter jets and bombers flying over their house, bombings close by, stories of their family members, Mr. Speaker, and it really becomes real very quickly. We get a direct connection when you're talking to those people that are experiencing it virtually first-hand, and you're experiencing it through them, Mr. Speaker.

But what really struck me was the stories of, again, the resilience and the tenacity, the determination of the Ukrainian people. And they're not going to be rolled over, Mr. Speaker. You know, stories of . . . whether it's the babas, so to speak, that normally in the farmers' markets would be selling their wares, their baking, their bread. What are they doing, Mr. Speaker? They're building Molotov cocktails. They're not laying down. Mr. Speaker, we hear about President Zelenskyy, where he was offered a ride out of the country. What did he say? "I don't need a ride. I need ammunition." Mr. Speaker, or I mean he's a fighter, the mayor of Kyiv, Klitschko, a former heavyweight boxing champion. He's not laying down, Mr. Speaker. He'll fight to the very end, Mr. Speaker.

Or a story that was thought to be possibly urban legend, but I've kind of followed this story, the Ghost of Kyiv. Mr. Speaker, a fighter pilot, it was unknown who it was, but he became an ace within I think the first number of a few days, within the first week of the battle starting there. He is credited with downing seven Russian MiGs and other aircraft, Mr. Speaker. I think Friday it was, the Russians were credited with bringing him down with a surface-to-air missile, Mr. Speaker. But who was this man? Colonel Oleksandr Grey Wolf Oksanchenko, a former fighter pilot, retired, now an air show pilot, a demonstration pilot I think, working for the Ukrainian military. But at his age, older than me, he got back in a fighter plane to fight the Russians, Mr. Speaker. And I think this is indicative of the Ukrainian people, what Vladimir Putin's up against, and why I think many here and many around the world believe that Putin and his army are not going to

be successful, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I'm going to wrap up my comments. We're getting late in the night. Mr. Speaker, slava Ukraini, heroyam slava. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to be able to speak to the motion tonight. And it's not much of a debate. It seems like we're all on the same side. I don't understand really what a debate is, but it normally seems that people are opposed, and we're all together and that's a great place to be at. I've never been to the Ukraine myself, but I did have an opportunity to be in a war in the former Yugoslavia. I went through there thinking that I was going to be helpful and ended up making it through, and wasn't able to do anything. I thought I'd find some of the kids . . . It was kind of crazy. I was 20 years old.

But I ended up getting into Hungary. I got through. And it turns out that you could get into Serbia because Mila Mulroney was Serbian and so they let you go through. And there were sanctions. And you know, I ended up in Hungary, where I think a lot of the Ukrainians are going to be. And I spent three days in prayer for those kids and ended up going back through Yugoslavia on my way back to Albania.

But you know, war isn't such a simple thing. It's not like one group against another. And I was talking to one of the leaders at a manufacturing company in my constituency and I said, you know, you guys, you got some workers that are from the Ukraine. And he said, yeah, we've got seven families actually live in Kyiv. And I said, wow, how is things going? And I passed on some thoughts that, you know, if there's anything we can do trying to help, people from Saskatchewan. And he said, well it's interesting because I was on the phone a few days ago and the one man had taken his wife and children to the border and dropped them off and, you know, hugged his wife and kids goodbye and, you know, told his kids, well we'll see you again. But he really didn't know. He went back and he's armed. So these seven men, you know, dropped off . . .

The other interesting piece is that he said, we also have some contract workers in Russia who don't want to be at war. So it is just such a . . . It's a tough day for the world. And when I was in Yugoslavia, one day people were married to each other's sisters and the next day, I'm a Serbian, you're a Croatian, and you're a Slovenian, and it's not so simple. You know, war isn't just about pride and bravado. It's the ones who are the weakest suffer, and the ones who are most vulnerable do the most suffering.

And so tonight I'd ask if I... Sorry, oh my. I'm the biggest baby in the place. I'd ask if I could pray but, you know, I spent three days in prayer in Hungary for the Yugoslavians. And you know, that was probably more valuable than the silly efforts of a 21-year-old. And you know, Vitaliy, he's one of the ministers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Regina, and I talked with him at supper and he said, you know... I said, you know, we're going to pray as a legislature. I just invite everybody. All's we've got to do is say amen, and I think that means we're all together in it. And I told him that we would be praying tonight for his people and he said, "Todd, thank you so much. We pray every night at 7." And I don't know if anybody was ... there was a few of us there, some from both sides at the first vigil. And Vitaliy, he was the one singing and one of the ones that prayed in the end. And so every night at 7 they're praying for their people back home.

But you know, I was standing there out in front of the Legislative Building here just wondering, well what do we do? You see all these families, some with their babies, some with . . . And it was really cold that day and they were all there, and at the end they sang and they prayed. And you know, it's interesting. Like, when we pray, I don't know what everybody's thoughts are but, you know, like if there's a God, he can humble the crowd. Like that's one thing he says he does. He says he can humble the crowd and he can raise the humble.

And just a little story of ... Like, could Putin change? Like, could God touch Putin's heart and break him? Or the Russian people, as one of the ministers said at supper, like maybe not Putin, he's maybe too stubborn, but what about the Russian people? Or the other Russian leaders? So my wife and I were having a fight one day, might have been a couple days in a row, I don't know — yeah, everybody says it's always my fault, that's obviously clear, so that's for sure — but I got a text from my wife's phone and it said "Dad, would you come home and give mom a kiss?" And I was like, ah, it's Hanna. And so my little eight-year-old, Hanna banana, texted her dad. And then she was working on mom, too. You know, Mom, what's going on here?

So these two silly adults are fighting over something so stupid can't even remember what it was. But somebody told me, they said, you know, anger or foolishness, it'll get you into trouble but pride will keep you there. And so one thing we can pray for is, you know, the Russians and the Ukrainians, you know, that God will humble the proud and that he'll give grace to the humble, because that's what he says he does. So why not? You know, there's a lot of Russians who I'm sure are not happy with what's going on and there's a lot of ... Nobody wins in a war. So let's just maybe, if you don't mind, let's just bow our heads together with the Russian Orthodox church tonight and let's just pray that God would put a quick end to this war.

Father in heaven, we just want to ask, would you show mercy to this world. Lord, we've just come through a tough time. Kids wonder what's happened to the world and now there's a war. And, Lord, you know the kids that are wondering about their dads, and people have lost loved ones and homes and their ... Lord, I just would ... You said to pray for our enemies and it seems like this Mr. Putin, I don't know him but he's lost. I have no idea, Lord, what's going through this head, but we just pray that you would break his proud heart and, Lord, that he would have a daughter or all of his leaders around him. Lord, humble their hearts. Restore peace there, Lord.

And for those ones who are afraid and scared and lost, we pray that you'd give them hope and strength. And for all those countries around that are opening their arms, in this province, and all the good people that have reached out, Lord, strengthen them and bless them and give them grace. And may we get through all of this, Lord, and have learned a lesson in this world of what can come from pride and self-seeking and jealousy. So help us, Lord, and help them there. In Jesus's name, amen.

[20:45]

The Speaker: — The motion by the Premier reads:

That the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan express its unwavering support for Ukraine's people, sovereignty, and territorial integrity and that this Assembly condemns Russia's wholly unprovoked and wanton invasion of Ukraine and calls on Russia to cease and withdraw all military options within Ukraine immediately.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — All in favour say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those opposed say no. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 20:45 until 20:48.]

The Speaker: — All in favour, please rise.

[Yeas — 57]

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| Stewart | McMorris |
| Merriman | Harpauer |
| Duncan | Tell |
| Makowsky | Docherty |
| Bradshaw | Kaeding |
| Carr | Eyre |
| Dennis | Hindley |
| Buckingham | Hargrave |
| Lambert | Bonk |
| Steele | Ottenbreit |
| C. Young | A. Ross |
| Skoropad | Nerlien |
| Friesen | Grewal |
| Cockrill | Goudy |
| Lemaigre | Jenson |
| Domotor | Meili |
| Vermette | Sarauer |
| Ritchie | Beck |
| A. Young | Nippi-Albright |
| | Duncan Makowsky Bradshaw Carr Dennis Buckingham Lambert Steele C. Young Skoropad Friesen Cockrill Lemaigre Domotor Vermette Ritchie |

The Speaker: — Anyone opposed, stand please.

[Nays — nil]

The Speaker: — Seeing none.

Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 57; those opposed, nil.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask for leave of the Assembly to move a motion of transmittal.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. State your motion please.

TRANSMITTAL MOTION

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, transmit copies of the motion, as well as verbatim transcripts of the debate, to the Ukrainian ambassador to Canada and the Russian ambassador to Canada.

I so move.

The Speaker: — The motion reads:

That the Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, transmit copies of the motion, as well as verbatim transcripts of the debate, to the Ukrainian ambassador to Canada and the Russian ambassador to Canada.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House now stands adjourned till 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 20:53.]

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