



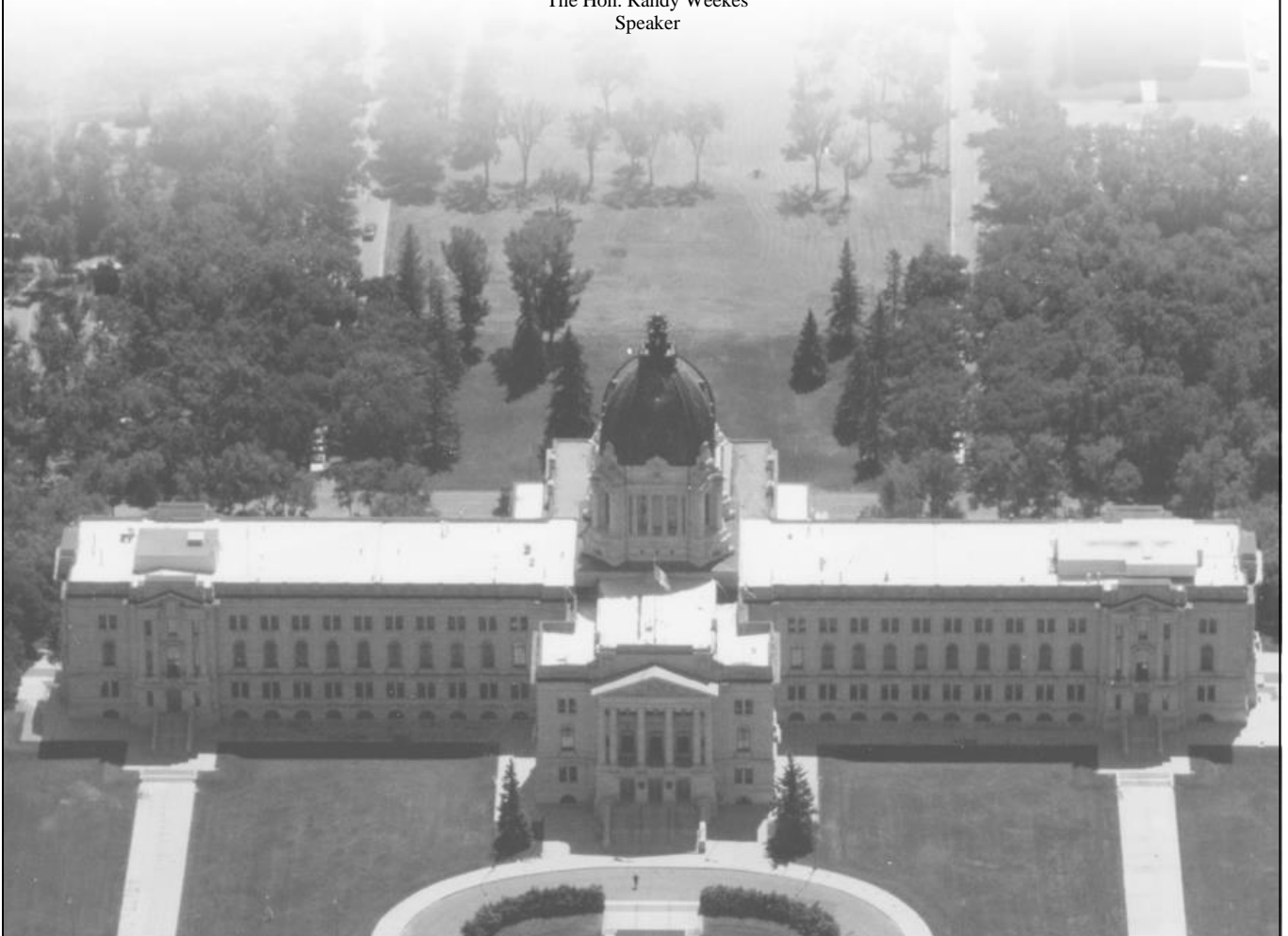
SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

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



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

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Independent (Ind.) — 1

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Gregory A. Putz

Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel — Kenneth S. Ring, Q.C.

Deputy Clerk — Iris Lang

Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyak

Sergeant-at-Arms — Sean Darling

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Sergeant-at-Arms

The Speaker: — I would like to present to the Assembly our new Sergeant-at-Arms, Sean Darling.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. By leave of the Assembly, I would ask leave to move Bill No. 77, *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act* to be moved the first time.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to introduce and consider all stages of Bill No. 77, *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act*. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Government House Leader may proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 77 — *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act*

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to consider all stages of the bill immediately.

The Speaker: — It have been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 77, *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act* be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader may proceed to move second reading of this bill.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 77 — *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act*

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, I think we will move . . . It kind of got a bit tangled up here in the stages, I think. But we're moving to move all stages of the bill immediately.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. We're at second reading. I invite the Premier to move.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to make a few very brief comments and remarks in support

of Bill 77, *The Athabasca By-election Act*. Of course the purpose of this bill is to allow Jim Lemaigre, who's with us here today, the new member for Athabasca, to take his seat in this Assembly, his Assembly, and so that he can begin the important task of representing the people of Athabasca in the far northwestern portion of this province.

Mr. Speaker, this was kind of an unusual by-election in every sense of the word. It was challenging campaigning throughout northern Saskatchewan in the middle of winter, in particular this winter with the level of snow that we have throughout most of this province. And I guess to many people, the result of this by-election may have been somewhat surprising.

Mr. Speaker, I got to know Jim previous to the campaign and got to know him better throughout the campaign. I spent a number of days in communities throughout the Athabasca constituency, and based on what I saw, the result most certainly was not a surprise for me. It quickly became apparent that Jim knew the communities that we visited and that Jim also knew the people that we visited with. And he knew them very well, and he understood the people of the northern portion of this province. They respected him, and he respected them.

So the result on February the 15th was not that much of a surprise to me after watching Jim communicate with the people that he was seeking to represent in this Assembly. And it wasn't a surprise for the outstanding team from the Northwest that worked with Jim in a successful by-election there.

However, the result was a surprise to a number of other people, including some of the more experienced observers of politics in Saskatchewan, and I think we can all understand why that might be. First, the Saskatchewan Party, we've never been successful in winning an election in the Athabasca constituency; in fact the Athabasca constituency has existed for now 114 years and it's always been represented by either Liberals or New Democrats or their predecessors the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation]. Not only that, but the Saskatchewan Party has never won a by-election in a seat that was been previously held by the NDP [New Democratic Party].

In fact the last time any governing party at all took a seat away from the opposition in a by-election was in 1998, with the previous member who was also in the Athabasca constituency. That was, no doubt, another unusual by-election where — I think in fairness, all of our friend in this House — Buckley Belanger of the NDP took over from Buckley Belanger of the Liberal Party.

That by-election was shortly after the Saskatchewan Party was formed. We managed to garner close to 50 votes in that by-election. A few short years later in the February 15th by-election, the most recent by-election, we now have Jim Lemaigre, who earned over 50 per cent of the vote in Athabasca.

Mr. Speaker, Jim most certainly did not have history on his side. We had the people on his side, and Jim didn't pay attention to history. Jim was focused on making history in Athabasca by becoming the first Saskatchewan Party MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] representing Saskatchewan's northwest.

So I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the candidates that ran in that by-election. To all of the volunteers that worked on all the respective candidates' campaigns, who worked throughout that by-election, I know that Jim will be a strong voice for Athabasca on behalf of everyone that resides in the constituency. And I'm pleased — very pleased — to support Bill No. 77, and even more pleased to welcome Jim Lemaigre to sit in this Legislative Assembly.

So, Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 77, *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act* now be read a second time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Premier that Bill No. 77, *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — To which shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 77, *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act* be committed to the Committee of the Whole on Bills and the said bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills immediately.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Committee of the Whole on Bills.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Committee of the Whole on Bills.

The Speaker: — I do now leave the Chair for the Assembly to go into Committee of the Whole on Bills.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BILLS

Bill No. 77 — *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act*

The Chair: — The business before the committee is Bill No. 77, *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act*. Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[Clauses 1 to 6 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 77, *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act*. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I would move that this bill be now read the third time and passed under its title . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I don't have a script. I'm making it up. What's new, hey, Mr. Chair? Mr. Chair, I would move that this committee report progress back to the House.

The Chair: — I'll try it again. The Government House Leader again.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move that the committee report the bill without amendment. There we go.

The Chair: — It has been moved that the committee report the bill without amendment. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Chair: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of Committee of the Whole Assembly.

Mr. Hargrave: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 77, *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act* without amendment.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader may proceed to move third reading. I recognize the Government House Leader.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 77 — *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act*

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that the bill be read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 77, *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again?

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

[13:45]

I am advised that His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan is here for Royal Assent. Please rise.

[At 13:46 His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber and took his seat upon the Throne. His Honour then gave Royal Assent to the following bill.]

ROYAL ASSENT

His Honour: — Pray be seated.

The Speaker: — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly in its present session has passed a bill which, in the name of the Assembly, I present to Your Honour and to which bill I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

Clerk: — Your Honour, the bill is as follows:

Bill No. 77 - *The Athabasca Constituency By-election Act*

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to this bill.

[At 13:48 His Honour retired from the Chamber.]

The Speaker: — Be seated please. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to move a motion to recess for the swearing-in ceremony of the new member.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Government House Leader may proceed.

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

That this Assembly recess for the administration of oath of allegiance for the new Member of the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved:

That this Assembly recess for the administration of oath of allegiance for the new Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly stands recessed to the call of the Chair.

[The Assembly recessed from 13:49 until 14:02.]

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Speaker: — I hereby inform the Assembly that pursuant to an Act of this Legislative Assembly respecting a by-election in the constituency of Athabasca which was assented to today, March 7th, 2022, Mr. Jim Lemaigre is authorized to take his seat as a member of the constituency of Athabasca.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you Mr. Jim Lemaigre, member for the constituency of Athabasca, who has taken the oath. He has signed the roll, and he now claims the right to take his seat.

The Speaker: — Mr. Lemaigre, I want to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly, and I hope that your time here will be one that serves to be a record of honour to yourself, your constituents. Let the hon. member take his seat. Congratulations.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Request leave for an extended introduction, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Provincial Secretary has asked leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce some very special guests in your gallery today. I'm pleased to welcome His Excellency Roy Eriksson, ambassador of Finland to Canada. He is accompanied by Seppo Rantala, a trade commissioner at the Finnish embassy in Ottawa, and Chad Eggerman, honorary consul for Finland in Saskatchewan, who hails from Saskatoon. I am pleased to welcome these guests.

This is the ambassador's first official visit to our province since his appointment in 2019. Before taking his post in Canada, His Excellency served as ambassador to Mexico, where he was accredited to serve as ambassador to nine Central American and Caribbean countries, including Cuba and Belize. He has a busy schedule while he's here, meeting with representatives from

government, industry, and academia in Regina.

As two northern jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, it's safe to say that the people of Saskatchewan and Finland share a common understanding of long, cold winters and a deep appreciation for hockey that few other jurisdictions can claim.

But ours is a relationship that is much stronger than that. Historically, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is strongly connected to the people of Finland. Immigrants from Finland began settling the land that would eventually become Saskatchewan as early as 1887. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there's an area of Saskatchewan near the towns of Esterhazy and Rocanville, close to the Manitoba border, where to this day residents still refer to as New Finland.

Those first immigrants and many generations that have since followed have contributed to our provincial tapestry, one that features so many different peoples and cultures from around the world. So deep is the connection that, Mr. Speaker, in 2016 the Knuttila family, descendants of Finnish immigrants to the province, donated a 100-year-old historic settler home to the World of Trails museum in Finland. Visitors to the museum will get an opportunity to see what life was like for those first Finnish immigrants to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward to continuing to strengthen the bonds between Saskatchewan and Finland. We are honoured to have the ambassador with us today, and I ask that all members of this honourable Assembly join me in welcoming our distinguished guests to Saskatchewan's legislature and to our province.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to request leave for extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members, I'd like to join with the member opposite on behalf of the official opposition in extending a warm welcome, or sort of warm welcome here today in Saskatchewan, to His Excellency Eriksson, as well as Mr. Rantala and Mr. Eggerman. Thank you so much for your visit, and welcome to Saskatchewan.

Now I don't have nearly the facts and figures that the member opposite had. Most of my touchpoints with the great country of Finland come from hockey. And so, on behalf of Canada, congratulations on Olympic gold. Heartbreaking obviously for those of us in Canada, but a wonderful accolade for the people of Finland. Also through my own misspent youth as a snowboarder, I spent some summers in Whistler getting up to no good with many esteemed young people from the great country of Finland.

Well we thank you so much for your time here in Saskatchewan

and encourage you to enjoy everything this magnificent province has to offer — some of the best local businesses as well as, I would put, some of the best beer in the entire world made with Saskatchewan-grown barley, hops, and grain. So again, thank you. A warm welcome from us across both sides of the aisle and enjoy your visit.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce a guest who is not seated in any of your galleries or on any kind of seat at all. It's my pleasure to introduce Éamon Robert Day Conway who came to us late in January, rather precipitously, and will be spending a bit of time with us in here. His accomplishments to date include pooping on two sitting member of this Legislative Assembly. One happens to be to the left of me; the other happens to be to the right.

But no, seriously, Mr. Speaker, hopefully his presence here can be a reminder that, while we disagree on many things, he's a reminder of why we do this work. And it's my hope that he will at least set a minimum standard of behaviour below which none of us will fall. So please welcome Éamon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents of Saskatchewan, particular to the northeast of Saskatchewan — and I hope the member for Carrot River's listening in here today — with respect to a highway that's simply not in adequate condition at all. It's described as having long-standing ruts and overall deterioration.

This is a vital highway between Hudson Bay and Preeceville, so important to those within the community and in the area, important to farms and to industry, Mr. Speaker. In 2021 it was rated the number three worst road in Saskatchewan by CAA [Canadian Automobile Association]. And local folks have been petitioning on this front, and they've brought forward this petition to the Assembly.

The prayer reads as follows:

That we call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately address the inadequate condition of Highway 9 by working with and listening to the concerns of municipalities, residents, and industry.

These petitions are signed by concerned residents of Hudson Bay. I so submit.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet again to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to reverse the damaging changes under the new

SIS [Saskatchewan income support] program. I take no pleasure at all in having to stand up yet again at the beginning of this next session to speak about the issues with SIS. But I continue to hear, as critic in this area, about the cruel fallout of this new social income assistance program, Mr. Speaker.

Despite an announcement that direct payment would be returned, we've seen stories in the media as recent as last week outlining the fact that that's simply not happening adequately on the ground. And I want to reiterate my offer to the minister to meet with her to discuss the feedback I received on this program in late 2021. I provided this report to the minister and I remain open to meeting with her, to discussing its findings and recommendations. There is so much at stake, and this program continues to hurt the people of Saskatchewan, the most vulnerable at that, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, I'll read the petition:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to restore direct payment of rent and utilities for income support clients.

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

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to fix the rural health care staffing crisis.

These citizens wish to bring to our attention that recruitment and retention of health care professionals is a particular issue in Saskatchewan's rural health care facilities, leading to many emergency room, acute, lab, and x-ray service disruptions; that the ongoing pandemic has created burnout and led to early retirements and resignations, which has rippling effects on our cities and towns; that health care workers and their families are valuable assets in Saskatchewan communities and local economies; and at the 2021 SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention, over 94 per cent of rural leaders voted to support a resolution acknowledging the nursing and health care worker shortage across Saskatchewan.

[14:15]

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 fix the rural health care staffing crisis.

This petition is signed by individuals from North Battleford and Sedley, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present,

for the first time, a petition today calling for the government to permanently freeze tuition for all international students in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, these tuition fees have risen 50 per cent over the past 10 years — that's five zero, Mr. Speaker. In calling for this freeze, we correspondingly call for a proportionate increase in operating grants to the institutions.

The signatories would like to bring to our attention the following points: that international students pay up to three times as much in tuition as their domestic counterparts, which is fundamentally unfair; that even after five years of graduation, 53 per cent of international students in Saskatchewan end up leaving the province; and that in order for Saskatchewan to lead the nation in innovation, progress, and economic success, Saskatchewan must focus on retaining international students, which we haven't been doing to date.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to freeze tuition for all international students.

Mr. Speaker, the petition today has been signed by people from Regina. I do so present.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to fund in vitro fertilization treatments here in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, it's our first day back in a while. And over the Christmas holidays I was out in the community, and I had a woman literally fall into my arms crying about her struggles to afford IVF [in vitro fertilization].

Now as a politician occasionally I have people come up to me, compliment me, heckle me, the odd compliment/threat combination. But having people literally fall into your arms weeping because of an issue that has been raised in the legislature, that has such significant impact on their family, is not something that happens every day, Mr. Speaker. And with the cost of living rising, affording a family for so many in this province is increasingly out of reach.

Mr. Speaker, one in six couples in Saskatchewan experience infertility. And, Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition wish to bring to our attention that their ability to conceive and to grow a family here in Saskatchewan should not depend on their economic status.

I will read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition today all reside in Imperial, Saskatchewan. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Support for Ukraine

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you could see by the flags in this Assembly, our hearts and minds are with Ukraine. In response to Russia's ongoing unprovoked attack, Saskatchewan stands with our friends, family, and neighbours at home and abroad.

Our communities are coming together to show that we stand for Ukrainians. Our government has donated \$100,000 to support humanitarian efforts. SaskTel has waived long-distance and text-messaging fees from Canada to Ukraine. We're also working with post-secondary institutions to determine the impact on our international students. The Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority has delisted Russian products from its distribution centre and retail stores.

We are committed to supporting those from Ukraine who are fleeing the brutal attacks through funding for the community support coordination, including settlement services for Ukrainian families arriving in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program is being prioritized for any applications received from Ukrainian citizens. We are committed to ensuring Ukrainian newcomers are welcome in our community with successful long-term resettlement.

Mr. Speaker, members of the Ukrainian community helped build our province, this province, and they will be full participants in building a brighter future for our province. I now ask all members to join me in expressing unwavering support for Ukraine, its people, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today with a heavy heart to recognize the tragic events unfolding in Ukraine. As people across the globe watch the Putin regime violently invade the sovereign nation of Ukraine, we in Saskatchewan, we feel these events deeply. Ukrainian people have played a vital role in building our province. From varenyky to Malanka, Ukrainian culture and history run deep in Saskatchewan and touch all of our lives.

The province has a long-standing history of working with local groups such as the Saskatchewan branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to support settlement services for refugees from Ukraine. At this time, we must reaffirm our support for this important work and ensure Ukrainian people fleeing persecution can find safety, support, and refuge in Saskatchewan as generations before them have done.

What the world has witnessed since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine is a strong, independent nation made up of people proud of their homeland. As people who feel the same way about our

home in Canada, we are called to stand beside them. We stand today in condemnation of Vladimir Putin's attack on Ukraine and all those who enable those horrific actions. We stand today in support of the people of Ukraine. We stand together. Slava Ukraini.

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

TeleMiracle 46 Breaks Records

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend was a record-breaking weekend in Saskatchewan. TeleMiracle 46 raised \$8,002,722, over \$8 million, Mr. Speaker. This year also saw TeleMiracle's largest-ever single donation, a bequest worth 1.8 million.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, for nearly half a century the 20-hour telethon has been raising funds to support Saskatchewan people. It's not just about raising money for mobility devices, communication aids, and medical trips. It's about coming together to instill hope. It's about giving inspiration to so many. It's about showing people around our province that no matter what card you're dealt in life, your community is here for you. Your community cares for you.

This record-breaking total from this year's TeleMiracle wasn't a miracle, Mr. Speaker. It was a testament to the generosity of Saskatchewan people. I want to thank each and every single individual and group that participated this year. Thank you for organizing, for travelling, for performing, for taking phone calls and pledges. Thank you for calling, for caring, and for supporting the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, TeleMiracle is a uniquely Saskatchewan event. I'm proud to support it. And I now ask all members to join me in congratulating the Kinsmen TeleMiracle foundation on another successful event.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this past weekend the Kinsmen, Kinettes, and Kin clubs of Saskatchewan hosted TeleMiracle 46. Once again Saskatchewan people opened their hearts and rang those phones by raising the all-time record-breaking sum of \$8,002,722. We even witnessed the largest single donation in the history of TeleMiracle by the late Eva Vera Morgan, who donated \$1.7 million.

Eva Vera Morgan passed away in February 2021 at 99 years old. She was said to have looked forward to TeleMiracle every year as it warmed her heart to watch the donations come on in. This donation was her way of supporting TeleMiracle and the people of Saskatchewan.

This year the slogan of the event was Rooted In Saskatchewan, which Eva Vera Morgan certainly was. She lived most of her life in rural Saskatchewan, operating a mixed grain and cattle farm with her husband, John Morgan. In step with this year's slogan, even the entertainment outdid itself with local entertainers from Vanscoy, Kindersley, Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon, Avonlea, North Battleford, Martensville, and Lumsden.

I ask all members to join with me in congratulating the TeleMiracle foundation and board, all the Kinsmen and Kinettes, the local entertainers, Eva and her family, and all of the Saskatchewan people who made this year's TeleMiracle such an incredible, record-breaking success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Remembering John Hopkins

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. John Hopkins passed away peacefully in the presence of family on Wednesday, February the 2nd, 2022 at the age of 61, following a courageous battle with prostate cancer. John was born in Toronto, Ontario. Growing up he listened to The Beatles with his mother and at a young age discovered his love and passion for music.

In his early life, John struggled with mental health and addictions, which ultimately led to him leaving Toronto in hopes of starting a new chapter in Regina. John turned his life around and became sober in 1984 and went back to university to pursue a better life for himself and his family. John's professional career began with Regina's Market Square. In 2001 he left to become the executive director and eventually CEO [chief executive officer] of the Regina Chamber of Commerce, a role he would hold for the next 20 years.

In 2018 John was diagnosed with stage IV prostate cancer. He made it his life's mission to advocate for men's health and prostate cancer awareness. John was a part of The Garage Band, mainly playing his favourite Beatles music. The band would go on to raise \$1.4 million for the Allan Blair Cancer Centre and cancer research.

John will be forever missed and remembered by those who knew him as a husband, father, brother, uncle, grandfather, friend, sponsor, colleague, and Regina community leader. Rest easy, John.

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

Battlefords Resident Raising Awareness Around Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to highlight a resident of The Battlefords who is currently undertaking a significant challenge — walking across Canada.

Krista Fox of North Battleford is currently partway through her walk across our great country to raise awareness about missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. This week she is walking through the communities of the interior of British Columbia.

She started her journey by visiting the Highway of Tears in northern BC [British Columbia] and then headed to Victoria to begin her walk in mid-February. People interested in supporting Krista's journey can do so by visiting her GoFundMe page, and I would encourage those in this House to join me in that effort.

Krista is joined on her walk by Lindsey, whose sister Megan

Gallagher has been missing since September of 2020. Krista is also joined by Diane Morin, who is the mother of Ashley Morin, who has been missing since 2018. And, Mr. Speaker, I think I speak for the entire Battlefords constituency and the province when I say that we continue to hope for the safe return of Ashley to our community.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members of this House to join me in recognizing Krista Fox and encouraging her as she walks across Canada to bring awareness to this important issue. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Athabasca Constituency Has a Seat at the Table

Mr. Lemaigre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured and humbled to stand in my place today as the representative for Athabasca. Thank you to the constituents of northwest Saskatchewan for your confidence and trust.

Mr. Speaker, serving as their representative is a responsibility I do not take lightly. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be here and Athabasca wouldn't have a seat at the table. But for the first time in a very long time, Mr. Speaker, Athabasca does have a seat at the table. I'm excited to get to work advocating for them and advancing their interests. This includes but is not limited to health care and long-term care, economic opportunities, and highways, and providing a future for the region's youth.

Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House are best positioned to get the job done. One elder put it quite nicely when he said, "We've been on the outside of government for so long. Why wouldn't we put ourselves back here with this opportunity?"

[14:30]

People were ready for a change in representation and they saw this as an opportunity to have representation at the table. Mr. Speaker, my success is a credit to them. They are my priority and I'm ready to be their voice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Provincial Support for Ukraine

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We enter this Chamber in troubled times, deeply troubled times. The Putin regime's attacks on civilian targets are an appalling reminder that we must stand united in support of the people of Ukraine. This is an issue on which Saskatchewan people are, and must remain, united. We support the steps taken by the government so far. We also know we can do more and we are here to help.

Will this government take the opposition up on our good-faith offer to participate in the Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations advisory committee, or SURAC, and create an opportunity for true bipartisan co-operation on behalf of Saskatchewan's unified support for the people of Ukraine?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the government very much appreciates the opposition's support for the measures that the Government of Saskatchewan has taken in supporting Ukrainian people, those in Ukraine and those of Ukrainian descent that are living and were part, quite frankly, of building the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to the question, the Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations advisory council is just that. That is a number of folks here in the province that are part of that council that our Legislative Secretary, the Legislative Secretary responsible for the Government of Saskatchewan-Ukraine Relations has been working with closely for a number of years now, but working with obviously more closely over the course of the last number of weeks and months, Mr. Speaker.

He's met with Mr. Gerald Luciuk a number of times. I myself met with Mr. Luciuk, and on his advice . . . A number of the initiatives that I'll get into maybe in a subsequent question, Mr. Speaker, is precisely what the government has been working on: providing some funding through the Ukrainian Canadian Congress; providing some administrative support for our SURAC committee right here at home.

But the SURAC committee itself, Mr. Speaker, is not part of government; it's providing advice to the government. We're most certainly working closely with them, taking that advice, Mr. Speaker, and putting it into action on behalf of the people that live here, but more so on behalf of the people that live here to show our support for those in Ukraine.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is so important that we work together at this time and that we use every lever that government has to advance the cause of the people of Ukraine. Governments like Brazil have been described as being held economically hostage by Russia due to their need for potash, and they're actively seeking new suppliers. Other countries like India and China, both of which have trade offices from our province, are also primary buyers of Russian exports.

Mr. Speaker, what steps has this government taken to leverage those trade offices and our ministries in order to target Russian exports and join the international efforts to hamstring Putin's ability to bankroll this illegal invasion?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition to administrative support to the SURAC committee, and in addition to the financial assistance that we've provided for humanitarian support on the ground, in addition to working with our . . . The Minister of Immigration has been working closely with the federal government to open up all channels for the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program, but also for refugees to come from Ukraine here to Saskatchewan.

And we will support any number that can arrive, that we're able to land on the ground here in Saskatchewan. We will support as many Ukrainian people — that are in the conflict, Mr. Speaker

— that we're able to work with the federal government to arrive here in Saskatchewan.

We obviously have been very vocal in our call for the world, but more to the point, Canada to quit importing Russian oil, for example, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing play out in Ukraine . . . And the Leader of the Opposition is very right, we are seeing a number of countries that are reliant on Russian imports, Mr. Speaker. And this is why I have said many times in this Assembly and outside of this Assembly that us in Canada, us in North America should be working very, very hard to ensure that we have North American energy security, North American food security, and North American economic sovereignty, Mr. Speaker. We need to take care of ourselves, and an example of why that is so important is happening and playing out in the world today.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In less than two weeks, 1.7 million Ukrainians have been displaced from their homes by this illegal invasion. The United Nations has described this as the largest refugee crisis in a century. With Saskatchewan's deep connections to Ukraine, we're uniquely positioned to accept Ukrainian refugees here in the province.

My question to the Premier today is this: has he asked the federal government to take steps to expedite these applications from Ukraine? And if not, will he join us in doing so? And will this government increase supports for Saskatchewan refugee resettlement programs, making sure that refugees arriving from all parts of the world have what they need to succeed here in their new home?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I believe the answer to all of those questions is yes. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education has been in close contact with the federal minister, Minister Fraser, on ensuring that he is aware that Saskatchewan will support as many from this area of conflict in the world, as many Ukrainian folks as possible into Saskatchewan either as refugees, either as immigrant nominees. However they can get here, Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan will provide the funds to ensure that they will be supported here in the province of Saskatchewan.

There have been multiple points of correspondence between the longest serving Immigration minister in Canada — which is here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — and the federal minister, who is working very hard on this and, I think, have a fairly strong and credible plan on how they are going to attempt to get as many Ukrainian people out of that area in the world where there's such conflict today, unnecessary conflict, and bring them to Canada. We have put forward, in Saskatchewan's case, that we will support as many Ukrainian people, Ukrainian families as possible right here in our borders.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, good to know the Minister of Education is on that one. Folks, we've all be humbled and inspired by Ukrainians who've bravely chosen to defend their

nation, who have bound together to support each other. And we've been inspired by Ukrainians around the world, including Ukrainians here in Canada, here in Saskatchewan, who've pulled together to offer whatever supports they can, including the Canada-Ukraine Foundation raising funds to aid in humanitarian support and on-the-ground support in the defence of their country.

Will this government join governments across Canada, go beyond \$100,000, join by matching donations to the Canada-Ukraine Foundation, help them raise the necessary funds to assist with that humanitarian aid in Ukraine?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, on our conversation, the Legislative Secretary on Government of Saskatchewan-Ukraine Relations with Mr. Luciuk, it was put forward a few items that we could do very early in this process. One was to contribute some dollars, public dollars, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatchewan to the humanitarian effort through the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Mr. Speaker. We very quickly did move on that. One, to raise the profile of the effort of this humanitarian fundraising initiative, Mr. Speaker. We have done that.

We are open to looking at how we can further support Ukrainian people, not only on the ground through humanitarian efforts but supporting them in getting them here to Saskatchewan where we can. We will provide the funding for an indeterminate number, as many as we are able to get here, get out of that area of conflict, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Saskatchewan is going to be there to support them as individuals and most certainly support them as families. That's why we have also provided this administrative support to the SURAC committee so that we're able to ensure that families are able to stay in touch and to bring them together either today or at a later date.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people, the Saskatchewan government, stand with our fellow countrymen in Ukraine, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to do all that we can to support them through this very unnecessary and very tragic time of conflict, Mr. Speaker.

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

Rising Fuel Prices and Cost of Living

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, WTI [West Texas Intermediate] oil prices have been sent soaring, well past 100 bucks a barrel. While this is spiking government revenues, it's a hard time for people and consumers. Today if you were to fill up with gas, if you could afford that bill, you'd be paying nearly a buck sixty a litre — 43 cents a litre more than a year ago today.

Never mind the cost-of-living pressure from increasing utility costs and food prices. Saskatchewan people are paying more and getting less. It's simply unsustainable. Will this government provide some relief to Saskatchewan families, families facing the financial hardship of massive cost-of-living increases?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And there is no doubt that the inflation that families are having to deal with right now is very stressful, and we recognize that. We have always had conversations in our government on affordability, and that's why we've reduced income taxes to among the lowest — I believe the lowest — in Canada for a family of four. That's why we've increased our seniors' income plan by over three times, over triple the amount of that assistance than it used to be. That's why we have the active families benefit. That is why we have the home renovation tax credit. That is why we have among the second highest of our utility costs.

And all of those have to be taken into consideration as you look as to what more you can do, and that is what we will be doing going forward. Is there more that can be done? But, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan government has stood up and addressed affordability in many, many fronts, not just one commodity.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, gas prices are a buck sixty a litre. And that government hiked taxes in a record way with the PST [provincial sales tax] hike a few years ago, Mr. Speaker, cranking up the cost of living. Saskatchewan people are facing serious financial hardship with the cost-of-living increase.

We have the dubious distinction of having the worst mortgage delinquency rate in the country for many years. Grocery prices are soaring. Food bank usage is up. Those living paycheque to paycheque are facing very tough choices. Meanwhile rising resource prices, driven even higher by global uncertainty, are padding the government's coffers.

The Sask Party needs to act to provide relief to the skyrocketing prices at the pumps. Will this government commit to a relief plan for the record high fuel prices?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, it's kind of special coming from a member sitting opposite that supports a carbon tax, a carbon tax. A member that supports a federal policy that says if we can make the cost of fuel high enough, people will stop using it; they will change their habits.

Now the market has driven it to that high cost. Is he going to join us when we ask the federal government to pause the carbon tax?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The feds have a very important role to play on this front, and so does that provincial government, that provincial government whose tax is actually even higher than the carbon tax, and a government that has soaring government revenues at a time that people need relief.

At mid-year, revenues for oil and gas were up \$250 million from budget, and that's a good thing in this important industry. Now those revenues have only grown and have been sent soaring with Putin's invasion.

This spike in provincial coffers is a positive in some ways, but it's no sniff of help to Saskatchewan people struggling with the cost of living. Again, will you commit to a gas price relief plan that will provide relief at the pumps today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows that our government committed over \$2 billion just in supports, the stimulus supports to help families and individuals in our province to deal with COVID expenses. We have been there all the way through for extra costs within health care for COVID expenses. And that member opposite has sat there and he has said we've spent too much money; we need to be more accountable. And he's said in the past, whenever there was good prices, we didn't save money. Well now he's saying we shouldn't save money; we should just spend it.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, we are not balanced at this point in time. It's unfortunate but it's true. And is that member then . . . He wants the province to backfill the federal government increasing the carbon tax. Is that what he's asking: for the citizens of Saskatchewan to reduce the cost so that the federal government on April 1st can increase it back up?

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

Reporting of COVID-19 Data

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Health: how many people are currently in hospital with COVID-19? How many people are currently in intensive care? And how many Saskatchewan people were lost to COVID-19 in the last 24 hours?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And first of all I want to, on behalf of the government, pass on my condolences to those that we have lost to COVID, our friends, neighbours, and our family members that we've lost, not just in the last little while but over the duration of this very trying pandemic, Mr. Speaker.

COVID has challenged all of us in this province and all across Canada and all around the world. But the Saskatchewan people have met that challenge, Mr. Speaker. We have 80 per cent of our people that are double-dosed. We also have many rapid tests available. Almost 18 million rapid tests have been distributed throughout this province to be able to protect the people, Mr. Speaker.

But what we've also done on top of that is we've brought in monoclonals to be able to make sure that if people are treated, Mr. Speaker, in a very rapid way . . . I also want to say a very quick thank you to the health care workers that have been carrying us through this pandemic and the support that they've received, not just from the government but from the community all across, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, I do believe in . . . that the people in Saskatchewan. I have faith in the people of Saskatchewan that they can assess their own risk and they can make sure that they're moving back and living with COVID. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, how many people are currently in the hospital with COVID-19? How many are currently in intensive care? How many Saskatchewan people were lost to COVID-19 in the last 24 hours?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the members opposite know well, we report this out on Thursday. Every Thursday we report this information out from Dr. Shahab. This is what Dr. Shahab has recommended that we report out. But what I can report to the House is that our overall . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite want to keep chirping about this. This is important stuff. The member opposite hasn't stopped talking since I've got to my feet.

Mr. Speaker, what I can inform the House is provincially we are at 91 per cent capacity of our overall health care system. This is in a much better position than we were certainly in the fall, and that number is continuing to go down. We have some challenges certainly within our health care, but I know that are health care workers can certainly rise to those challenges. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — This a political decision, Mr. Speaker. Of course the minister has the numbers; he just won't share them. On February 7th the Health minister decided to cease all daily reporting of COVID data, making it impossible for Saskatchewan people to conduct "individual risk assessments."

The last time the numbers were released, our death rates led the nation — double the national average. So far for February, over 140 families lost a loved one due to COVID-19. And not a word from that Premier or that minister, no condolences, no recognition of the suffering or loss before today. Does the minister recognize that you can't just wish away a pandemic?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, the first thing I said when I rose to my feet was that . . . Mr. Speaker, the first thing I said when I got up was my condolences to the family members . . . This is serious and they're over there heckling me when we're talking about people that we've lost. That's how they act over there. I confessed my condolences on behalf of the government and myself, Mr. Speaker, to the friends, family members, and the neighbours that we have lost because of COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, they know very well that this was a clinical decision made by Dr. Shahab. I know they don't like that, but this is the recommendation that Dr. Shahab has brought to the government. We accepted that recommendation. He has explained this several

times through the media. The members opposite don't like this, but this is a clinical decision made by Dr. Shahab on how this province is going to live with COVID. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Take ownership for your own decisions here, Mr. Speaker. This is a sudden change in reporting. We all want the pandemic to be over, but giving people less information about what is going on in our hospitals and ICUs [intensive care unit], no information on death rates, does not make any sense at this time.

How does the minister think that Saskatchewan people can keep themselves safe when the government is deliberately withholding the information that families need? Will the minister commit to resuming daily updates on the COVID-19 impacts to our health system?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we're not hiding anything from the public. We are being very transparent and giving out that information every Thursday in an epi report, which is a very detailed report of what has happened in the last week. This comes out every Thursday. The members opposite can check their emails, check the news releases. It comes out on Thursday, Mr. Speaker, all of the information that has to deal with COVID-19.

But what they will notice is that we are trending in the right direction. And why we're trending in the right direction, Mr. Speaker, is because the good people of Saskatchewan are taking their risk assessment. They don't need the government to tell them what to do, Mr. Speaker. They're making these decisions on themselves, whether they want to mask, whether they want to test because the Saskatchewan people are now educated on how to be able to manage COVID, Mr. Speaker.

I know the members opposite would like to have daily numbers that . . . they can go up and down all the time. But what we do have is weekly numbers, that they can have that information, along with the general public. They can get all that information, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Management of Pulp Exports and the Provincial Economy

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well speaking of things that were in the news today, earlier today Meadow Lake Tribal Council joined with Paper Excellence in issuing a statement calling for attention to the rail car crisis at Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp. Now, Mr. Speaker, CN has failed to adequately get their product to port for months. Storage facilities are full, and the mill hasn't run at full capacity since December.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Trade and Export Development represents the good people of Meadow Lake. So to the minister: what is he doing to directly support this pulp mill in getting its exports to market?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well first and foremost, that that member's economic positions are priceless. I mean, an enormous amount of work went into designing the timber allocations that we announced in the fall. All the projects are moving forward. Doors don't just fly open. Some facilities actually have to be built, retrofitted. Environmental assessments have to be done.

Paper Excellence is currently set to reopen the P.A. [Prince Albert] pulp mill by 2023. The new OSB [oriented strand board] mill in P.A. has to be built, but it's set to open in 2023. Expansion of the Carrot mill also 2023, and upgrades to the Big River saw mill in the process. And, Mr. Speaker, there are clear milestones in the provincial allocations which we set. We want to create an economic climate in this province where projects can move forward, Mr. Speaker, not drafting convention resolutions not to cut down a single tree, which is what they did.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Mr. Speaker, a million dollars a day, \$1 million a day. That's what the pulp mill in Meadow Lake contributes to the Canadian economy. Mr. Speaker, 740 indirect jobs. And the member can't find his feet, and the minister doesn't even know what pulp and paper mill we're talking about. Mr. Speaker, what is this government doing to get CN working for its customers to get their exports to market?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Mr. Speaker, obviously that remains an issue in terms of getting exports to market. But it is about the entire sector in the province, which she also referenced, Mr. Speaker, the P.A. mill and the sector as a whole.

That member was wringing her hands last year, demanding these projects be created and wanting to override existing contracts that were in place. Not the way we do business here in this province, Mr. Speaker. But when the timber allocations were announced, they were like, awesome, but then her position was that they were private investment decisions; the province had nothing to do with them.

Mr. Speaker, not creating an economic climate is what's leading to investment flight in other provinces. And for Goldilocks and the rest of the squad over there, jobs are never green enough; they're never woke enough; they're never subsidized enough; they're never transitioned enough; they're never just right. Those forestry announcements will create over 2,000 jobs and create a climate to create jobs. You actually have to believe in the economy, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Why is the member on your feet?

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

The Speaker: — Please state your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Ms. Mowat: — During question period just now, the minister referred to the member for Regina University as Goldilocks, which is currently a very personal attack which we have been cautioned against using in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the minister withdraw her remarks and apologize.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would encourage you, Mr. Speaker, to review the record. I think the member clearly was referring to a story in order to illustrate a point about what the members opposite were discussing, not referring to any individual member. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd encourage you to review the record and return to the House.

The Speaker: — I ask the Minister of Energy and Resources to withdraw and apologize.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Mr. Speaker, I withdraw and apologize a literary allusion to a fairy tale.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question no. 23.

The Speaker: — The question has been tabled. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask leave to move a motion with respect to Ukraine.

The Speaker: — Will the Premier briefly state the purpose of the motion and read the text of the motion?

MOTION UNDER RULE 61

Support for Ukraine

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Due to the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by Russia, I would like to move a motion in support of Ukrainian people and in condemnation of Russia, and I ask that members provide me leave to move the following motion:

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 operations with Ukraine immediately.

The Speaker: — The Premier has requested leave to move, without notice, a motion of urgent pressing necessity under rule 61. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to members of this Assembly for granting leave for what I think is a very important debate giving what we are seeing happen in Ukraine at the current time. It's been about two weeks, just under two weeks, since Russia launched its very brutal and unprovoked assault on the country of Ukraine. And I think when many of us watch the news each and every night, we're in a state of shock as to what we see transpiring today.

The pictures that we are seeing are like watching old newsreels of World War II. We see a woman comforting her sick child in hospital while bombs are falling in the background; the senseless destruction that we are observing, the senseless destruction of entire neighbourhoods with really no regard for human life. Modern, thriving cities are, as we speak, being turned to rubble, an ongoing attack that is mitigated only by the astonishing bravery of the Ukrainian people and the strong and unified response that we now see building around the world.

[15:00]

And, Mr. Speaker, there's one man to blame for this situation. Mr. Speaker, there was a time when Vladimir Putin was perceived as maybe a cagey and maybe even a cunning strategist, a ruthless but very formidable adversary for many around the world. But, Mr. Speaker, if we were inclined to think that before, we certainly are not inclined to think that today.

The invasion of Ukraine was a monumentally reckless act by Mr. Putin. In his quest to reconstitute the Soviet Union or create some type of Slavic empire, Putin has achieved the opposite of precisely what he set out to do. He wanted to bring Ukraine back into the Russian sphere of influence, and Ukraine in turn is actually moving closer to the western sphere. He wanted to weaken NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], and NATO today I think is more aligned and is quickly re-arming.

Vladimir Putin wanted to sow divisions throughout the western world, and I would say that the West today is more unified than they were prior to this invasion. In fact virtually no one stands with Russia in the world, and virtually everyone stands against Russia. Vladimir Putin has turned the Russian nation into a rogue state, and the Russian people are paying a very high price for this decision.

Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that Putin didn't consult with the likes of Saskatchewan before he led Russia to invade the country of Ukraine, because we very quickly I think would have told him that this is not a very good idea. We could have told him about the character of Ukrainian people, Ukrainian people that helped build this province. We know exactly how determined and resolute these folks can be.

And as I said, you think about the history of Saskatchewan, how many Ukrainians came to Saskatchewan a century ago and came here with nothing, nothing but the clothes on their back. They couldn't even speak English. The customs of this country, this province, were foreign to them. And sometimes they didn't even have enough money to build or to find their way into a house, so in many instances they dug a cave into a side of a river hill where

they lived until things got better and they were able to find some lodging.

And, Mr. Speaker, things did get better. Things got a lot better. Ukrainian newcomers in this province, they forged a life on the plains and in the parklands, and they went on to help build the province of Saskatchewan. And I would say they provided leadership in every sense or every realm that you could.

In time we had a Ukrainian premier in this province, two Ukrainian Lieutenant Governors. A Ukrainian Governor General was from this province of Saskatchewan. Ukrainian senators came from Saskatchewan. Leaders in business, in the arts, in sports, in politics, in science — Ukrainian people have made an outsized contribution to the progress of Saskatchewan just over the last century.

Mr. Speaker, we in this House, we know these people from our own personal experiences in our communities, from our own interactions. They're our friends. They're our neighbours. They're our colleagues in this House. They are our family members. And in this House collectively together, we represent all of them across this province.

They are compassionate, they are loving, and they are caring. But there's another side to Ukrainian people as well. I would say they are tempered with steel. They are as tough as they come. If you push them, they are going to push back, and they are going to push back pretty hard. We know that in Saskatchewan.

And here's something else we know in Saskatchewan: Ukrainian people fighting for their homeland half a world away will never, ever surrender. They will never give up. They will fight until their very last bullet. They will fight until their very last breath. Putin will not defeat them. Putin cannot defeat them. And he will not defeat Ukraine. The great nation of Ukraine will persevere.

Mr. Speaker, there is so much ambiguity in life. There are so many shades of grey that we face each and every day, and I think that's most particularly important as we look out past the last couple of years. But sometimes, there are moments when life is painted quite starkly in black and white. Sometimes we have absolute moral clarity on what we see before us, and today I think we are living through just such a moment.

Today in Ukraine there is a clear divide between good and evil, between what is right and what is wrong. On the one side there are those that believe in peace, those that believe in freedom and mercy, and those that believe in the rule of law. And on the other side, there are those that believe in force. They believe in violence and repression and the rule of the sword.

Mr. Speaker, we in this province owe an enormous debt to Ukrainians that are engaged in this struggle today. From President Zelenskyy and the leadership that he is providing, really the Churchill of our times, to the now famous seed lady, to the farmers towing Russian tanks away and selling them for scrap. Yet you get a lump in your throat when you think about what is happening and you think about them as individuals defending their country. Mr. Speaker, there was a columnist, David Brooks, he put it well when he wrote, and I quote:

They have shown us how the right kind of patriotism is

enabling a source of meaning and a reason to risk life. They've shown us that the love of a particular place, their own land and people, warts and all, can be part and parcel of love for universal ideals like democracy, liberalism, and freedom.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Martin Luther King said that human beings are tied in a single garment of destiny. Well our destiny in Saskatchewan and the destiny, I would say, of all Canadians is tied to the destiny of a free and independent Ukraine. Throughout our history, through our culture, through our shared values and beliefs, I can tell you this today: Saskatchewan will stand by Ukraine as this crisis continues to unfold. We're now in day 12. And we will be there for Ukraine and Ukrainian people, as long as it takes.

And our support includes welcoming refugees who are fleeing this terrible violence and chaos that we see on the news throughout the day. We are opening our doors to an unlimited number of Ukrainians that are impacted by this war. We will provide the supports necessary to ensure that they can successfully integrate into our communities in this province and integrate into our workforce as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at Saskatchewan's history, I have no doubt that they will integrate and integrate quickly. These folks will find a home here in Saskatchewan and they will feel at home in our Saskatchewan communities. Members of the Ukrainian community helped build this province. They sustain and enrich this province each and every day up to and including today. And they will be full participants in building a brighter future for all Saskatchewan citizens.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move the following motion:

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 operations with Ukraine immediately.

I so move.

The Speaker: — By leave, the Premier moved:

That the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan express its unwavering support for the Ukrainian people's 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 operations within Ukraine immediately.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to join the Premier today and support this motion to join with all of the members in this House today to share our words of solidarity and support for the people of Ukraine. I look and see the blue and yellow flags on our lapels and on our desks that we've seen at rallies around the province, around the country, around the world.

And I think this is a moment that is deeply troubling and deeply disturbing, but there are also moments of true inspiration. I see these rallies of support and solidarity, even within Russia, even within the people of the country that is invading, standing up and saying that it is wrong for Vladimir Putin right now to be invading a sovereign nation.

So amidst all of this darkness, we must look for our opportunities to find hope, and in Saskatchewan, in that history. And I appreciate what the Premier had to say about the history of Ukrainian people, is they're not a people you underestimate. These are people who have played an incredible role here in our province in establishing this province, have faced hardships that would cause most of us to just want to go back to bed. But they have stood up every day, got to work, done that work over the years and built so much in this province. In that history is hope.

And we see hope as well in the response in Ukraine today. It has been incredibly inspiring to see a president who, instead of taking a ride out of town, took up arms and stood beside his fellow citizens. To see the pediatric doctors setting up a clinic in the basement of a hospital at the time that shelling was coming from overhead. To see people playing music as refugees line up for hours and hours, trying to keep people's spirits up as they face the horrible reality of having to leave their homes behind.

These are dark times, but they are not without hope, not without possibility. And it's been inspiring to see here in Saskatchewan the way that people have come together. I think of all the folks at Regina's Euro Deli Kiev, how they have teamed up with the Ukrainian Co-op, Beauty Code Studio; they're raising money and collecting first aid kits and clothes to send to Ukraine, bound for Poland to help the people who are fleeing Putin's war. We've got the Saskatoon Co-op removing all of its Russian products from its shelves and SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] doing the same. We've got PicNic's Catering inundated with waves of support after they brought out yellow and blue cupcakes with the dollars going toward the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' Ukrainian refugees fund.

We have the kitchen at TCU [Teachers Credit Union] Place in Saskatoon raising \$15,000 for humanitarian causes by selling take-home dinners of perogies and borscht, cabbage rolls and sausage — things that, you know, we might think of as Ukrainian culture. But if you're from Saskatchewan, you grew up eating all those things. You grew up connected to Ukraine whether you knew it or not. You discovered that the people of Ukraine are part of who we are.

Just this weekend I was reading about a Ukrainian trio of siblings in Saskatoon who entertained crowds for hours on end, raising funds for displaced Ukrainians. I'm sure everybody in this House can think in their own home community of somebody who's stepped up to show support, whether they have that direct connection to Ukraine, whether they're part of that 13 per cent of Saskatchewan people who trace their roots back there, or whether they're just people with big hearts, because that's what people in Saskatchewan are. People are stepping up. And it's only fair that we, as elected officials, we step up as well, that we work together to try to find every way that we can to support in this time.

That's why I wrote to the Premier a few days ago and suggested

that there's a few things we can do, and that we're here to help. We're not here to cause trouble for the government on this. We want to be all working together, make sure that we're pointing in the same direction. We've got connections. We've got ideas. We want to bring everything we've got to this major project. This is a moment where Saskatchewan people are united in a cause and we should be as well. That's why we encouraged the government to think of a model, whether it's expanding SURAC's mandate and membership to involve members of the opposition or forming a new committee, bringing people together, not pushing each other away, not pushing ourselves apart.

We also need to be looking at what we can do with the infrastructure that we have in place, the trade offices, the trade ministry, the organizations that have been developed that are working on trade. How can we dial up that activity to make sure that we're reaching out to those countries that are currently buying from Russia — buying wheat, buying potash, buying whatever they're getting from Russia — that we're on their doorstep saying, you know what, Saskatchewan's got more of what you need and we aren't going to be involved in any way in the kind of things you're seeing from Putin's Russia. Show up and say that we're a safe, honourable, ethical trading partner people will want to do business with, now and for years to come.

[15:15]

We also see dollars being pledged across the country, matching dollars to the Canadian Ukraine foundation. I'm happy to see the \$100,000, but really, at a moment like this when we're talking about the size of this trouble and the wealth of this province, we can spare more than \$100,000 to help the Canada-Ukraine Foundation. Let's increase what we're offering for matching funds. Let's make sure that we're speaking up when it comes to those folks, that 1.7 million Ukrainians who've already had to leave their homeland, what the UN [United Nations] is calling the greatest refugee crisis in a century. The language around accepting as many Ukrainians as we can, it's excellent. Let's make sure we're also doing the work, putting the pressure on the federal government to ease that process so that as many people can get here safely, take that pressure off of Poland and Hungary and Romania, get people here safely and make sure that when they're here we're offering the support we need to. Open Door Society, Ukrainian Canadian council, the REACH [Refugee Engagement and Community Health] clinic, whatever organizations, the community clinic care in Regina, organizations that are already stepping up to support refugees — let's make sure they are able to deal with this coming wave. It's going to be a very challenging time.

The province has a great many tools in its toolbox. Let's make sure that we're putting our heads together and using every one of them, so that none of us can say a year from now, five years from now . . . That we can look back in this moment and say we responded to what we saw. We responded to the attacks from Vladimir Putin. We responded to the suffering, to the agony, the displacement of Ukrainians with everything we have, that we left nothing on the table in our support of people who are struggling. Because this is, as I said at the beginning, a deeply troubling time. It's a time when we're seeing awful events unfold around the world, and we know that it may not stop here. It could get far worse before it gets better. Let's make sure that we stand up in Saskatchewan, recognize the moment we're in, and be a beacon

of hope instead of missing this opportunity to help those in need.

So with those words, it is my honour to say that I would be happy to join the Premier and support this motion. Thank you very much.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for this opportunity to address this Chamber and the people of Saskatchewan about this matter of great urgency — Russia's unlawful invasion of the Ukraine.

To debate the following motion:

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 operations within Ukraine immediately.

And before I get into my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you to the opposition and particularly to the Opposition House Leader. She and I have been working on bringing this motion to the floor of the Assembly over the course of probably the last four or five days. And I want to say thank you to her in her leadership with her caucus in bringing this forward in a way that I think is unanimous amongst members.

I want to thank you as well, Mr. Speaker, for your forbearance in the flags on the desk which obviously is not something that we do on a regular basis. But I do want to thank you for that as well.

The barbaric assault on the people of the Ukraine must be denounced, and I'm proud of this Assembly for doing so today. The brutal actions by the Putin regime are an attack not just on Ukraine and its people but the values of democracy, freedom, and self-determination. Our government condemns the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and stands with the rest of the world against this cruel, vicious, and unprovoked war.

While it's imperative we stand against Putin's evil regime, we also need to stand with the people of the Ukraine. And, Mr. Speaker, our doors are wide open to those fleeing Ukraine. As you probably saw, Mr. Speaker, just last week we did announce that we would take, in this province, an unlimited number of refugees, those fleeing the war in Ukraine. I communicated that directly to the federal Minister of Immigration, and the Government of Canada is very, very aware of the unique reasons why Saskatchewan is positioned to accept a very large and significant number of Ukrainian refugees.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, our government announced supports that have been chronicled by the member for Canora-Pelly, the Legislative Secretary for Canada-Ukraine relations in a member statement earlier today. But that included financial support for humanitarian efforts in Ukraine, administrative support for SURAC, waiving long-distance text message charges for SaskTel, communicating with the federal government our willingness to accept displaced Ukrainians, and working with post-secondary institutions to determine the impact on

international students and potential supports, and delisting a number of products at the SLGA store.

And later today, Mr. Speaker, we have been working with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress on how we can really manifest in concrete policy terms that support going forward, so we're going to be in a position to make that announcement shortly, likely tomorrow morning. We're still working through a couple of details with the UCC [Ukrainian Canadian Congress], but we think that this is going to be a very, very important, significant continuing partnership with whom we have already had a long-standing settlement relationship that's going to be even more significant going forward.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, Ukrainian culture and traditions are deeply embedded in Saskatchewan. Approximately 15 per cent of our province's residents trace all or part of their ancestry to Ukraine. Generations of Ukrainians have helped build our province and we remain in their debt. We will offer safety to their descendants who are now being viciously attacked by the Putin regime.

We're also working closely with the federal government to coordinate our efforts to help displaced Ukrainians, and I've been in frequent contact with the federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to express our willingness and readiness to stand with the people of Ukraine. Already over one and a half million Ukrainians have been forced to flee, a number that we know will rise in the coming weeks and months.

This is the greatest displacement in Europe since World War II and one of the worst humanitarian crises in this century. In response to this, the federal government has announced two new immigration streams for Ukrainians who wish to come to Canada, the first being the Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel, which is the fastest and most efficient option, and also the special family reunification sponsorship pathway for permanent residence for immediate and extended family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

And I want to stress, Mr. Speaker, my discussions with the federal minister, we have been very insistent that those who are fleeing the Ukraine have a path to permanency, an expeditious path to arrival, an expeditious path to getting to Canada but also an expeditious path to permanency in staying if they so choose, Mr. Speaker. I think there's an expectation that many will wish to return to Ukraine if the war turns out the way that we hope it does, Mr. Speaker, but if not, we are prepared to have a very long-term resettlement of refugees here into this province.

So we support the actions of the federal government and hope they will result in more Ukrainians being able to resettle here. We'll continue to work with the federal government to ensure the process is working as efficiently as possible. And to expedite the process for Ukrainian families wishing to come to Saskatchewan and settle permanently, we will utilize the SINP, the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program, which has a successful track record of bringing Ukrainian citizens to our province. Over the last five years nearly 300 Ukrainians have arrived in Saskatchewan through the SINP. Any applications we receive from Ukrainian citizens through this program will be prioritized, and they have been already. There were a number that were in queue and in processing which we have expedited

already, Mr. Speaker.

Ukrainians who choose to come to this province will find a welcoming environment, supportive communities, and many who share their culture and speak their language, which will assist in ensuring long-term settlement success in Saskatchewan. The government has been welcoming newcomers, including those fleeing conflict, for decades. We have a well-developed network of services and providers around the province who are experienced and well-positioned to provide settlement supports and services to help the Ukrainian newcomers gain the language skills and connections they need to successfully integrate into our communities and workforce. And we're going to be making sure that we allocate those resources necessary to accommodate those who are arriving, Mr. Speaker, in whatever quantum they are necessary to do so.

We have and will continue to work closely with the business community and employers who want to help recently arrived Ukrainians by offering them employment. We believe this to be very important. We've been working very, very closely with our business leaders to make sure that we have an inventory of available opportunities for those who are arriving and also being able to play a role in matching skill sets for those who are arriving with jobs that are available here right now in Saskatchewan.

For employers wishing to do so, they're encouraged to advertise those opportunities on SaskJobs. Community groups who are interested in helping have the option of contacting their nearest immigrant service agency, and we will have further information on very precise contact information in the very, very near future.

We will continue working with the Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations advisory committee, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress of Saskatchewan, and others to develop more strategies to support the people of Ukraine and the Ukrainian community in Saskatchewan. I've also urged the federal minister to convene a meeting with provincial and territorial ministers to develop a pan-Canadian plan for Ukrainian resettlement. This was done in 2015 regarding the settlement of Syrian refugees, and we believe that that should happen again, and I communicated that directly to the federal minister.

The Government of Saskatchewan supports the sanctions imposed by the federal government and other countries around the world. We also support the federal government in banning oil imports from Russia and imposing severe and immediate and impactful trade sanctions. As we begin to welcome newcomers from Ukraine in the weeks ahead, we will continue working with partners and settlement services and the business community to make sure all necessary supports are in place.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to supporting the motion when we vote on this later today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to stand up here today and show my heartfelt support for the Ukrainians during these times of war. Mr. Speaker, last fall I had the honour of becoming the Legislative Secretary for Ukrainian relations for Saskatchewan. And it's quite an honour for me, being of full Ukrainian descent

and living in Canora. We're pretty heavily populated in the Ukrainian population there, and I was excited at the opportunity to serve my people in this area.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is home to about 140,000 Ukrainian people, and about 1.3 million Ukrainians live in Canada. Over the years, Ukrainian immigrants have helped to build this province, our province, and it's time that we step up and help out the refugees of Ukraine in getting them here and helping them abroad.

Mr. Speaker, I've been working with SURAC, the Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations advisory committee — Mr. Gerald Luciuk, the Chair; Angela Wojcichowsky, the Vice-Chair; Dave Dutchak; Alicia Klopoushak; Iryna Matsyuk and Jim Shevchuk and Mary-Anne Trischuk — as we work with the government, who are working together to see what we can do to support Ukraine. And we've been meeting quite regularly over the last . . . almost every week, and we will continue to do so. Even as I speak, we're going to be meeting in the next couple of days.

Mr. Speaker, it is with the help of SURAC and the co-operation of the government that we've been able to help supports in the Ukrainian community, like donating \$100,000 to the humanitarian effort — and that was even before the war — administration support for SURAC. We've waived the long-distance and text-messaging charges for SaskTel for families to connect with their families from Canada and Ukraine. We're prioritizing applications for Ukraine in the SINP program. We're working with the federal government to get refugees to Saskatchewan and we'll have no limit. We're taking all that we can.

We're working with post-secondary institutions on the impact on international students and what we can do to support them. We also have immediately dis-listed Russian products from the Saskatchewan liquor stores. And we will fly the Ukrainian flag outside the building that we walked up today, at the Legislative Building, in support of Ukraine for an unlimited time. Our Immigration minister has been working hard with the federal Minister Fraser to speed up the process in getting unlimited amounts of Ukrainians out of Poland and into Canada and into Saskatchewan.

[15:30]

Over the last few weeks, I've been to a few rallies in support of Ukraine around the province. I attended a couple, and talking to the people and just their heartbreaking stories of the families and just their friends that are back home in Ukraine, and just their concern of trying to get them out of there. The support and rallies have been attended very well and the support even from my colleagues has been phenomenal during these times.

I'm getting calls to my office, and I'm sure a lot of my colleagues are. Everybody in the province is offering to help, whether it's offering . . . I've had people offering farm houses, jobs, clothing, money. I've had people come in during the Rawlco Radio and they didn't even know what to do, so I kind of helped them through to give a cash donation. And it's just very warming to see the people reaching out and helping. They're opening up their doors. I've had people from Hudson Bay, Yorkton, Regina,

Saskatoon, Kamsack, all over, just giving phone calls of support and offering things.

I've had a long-time friend from Norquay, not too far from my place. Her daughter married a Ukrainian and they're living in Moldova. And she gave me a call, and just on Monday she went down there. Her daughter and three kids — 8, 6, and 2 — have trekked to Poland, and she's flying down there to help get her daughter and her three kids back into Canada. So you know, when you hear stories like that, it's just unbelievable and sad.

Mr. Speaker, about 100 years ago my grandparents, along with thousands of Ukrainians, immigrated to Canada and some landed in Saskatchewan. My Dennis family settled a few miles kind of southwest of Canora and had 11 kids, and my dad was the youngest one. So by the time I came around I never, ever did get to see my grandparents; they'd passed on.

But my mom and dad settled there and in 1947 opened up a grocery store to serve the Ukrainians in the area and that. In 1985 I bought into the business and I worked there for 31 years. And after 69 years of having that business and serving the Ukrainian people in the area — and I'll tell you they're quite proud, hard-working farmers in that area — we decided to sell and move on.

On my mother's side, they're Klimuiks, and they lived just north of Norquay in Arabella area. And I was fortunate to see my grandfather — and neither one of them talked English all the times that I was around — and my grandfather would pull me on a stoneboat to go get the cows and stuff like that. A proud Ukrainian, he worked hard. And I only lasted about six, seven years, and then he passed on and grandma came to live with me, and that's where I learned to learn a little Ukrainian. And I spoke Ukrainian and that, but you kind of lose it after a few years and stuff like that if you don't do it.

But anyways my area and hometown of Canora is fairly heavily populated with Ukrainians, and there are a lot of stories and tears of the war going on in Ukraine. And I'm proud to say that President Zelenskyy is a true president. He's standing up. And the bravery and the toughness of the Ukrainian people that are not going to give up, and they're not going to give in to Putin. And they're going to continue to fight for democracy and freedom, and they're going to win. They're going to win because we're Ukrainian tough.

And we must continue to help, as not only a province but a country. We must help with humanitarian support and help to these refugees that are going to come to our province. And we need to stop this war. We need to stop Putin. So with that I would like to say, please pray for Ukraine and the people of Ukraine.

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today in favour of the motion, with colleagues of course in solidarity. Of course one's heart breaks witnessing what we are in Ukraine — the confusion, the fear, the dislocation, the darling children trying

to play in subway stations that have been turned into bomb shelters, holding their parent's hand, destination often unknown, in their little pink parkas or soccer toques clutching a sparkly knapsack or a bear or something. "I am scared," said one. It's heartbreaking — the refugees, the violence. And of course everyone's heart stopped last week when we thought a nuclear power plant was actually emitting radiation. This wasn't supposed to happen. None of this was supposed to happen in 2022.

Ukraine, the scene, the battleground of such tragedy of the Bolsheviks, Holodomor, the Nazis, Chernobyl. I remember in the Place Riel tunnel in 1991 at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], Ukrainian students celebrating their country's independence. And there was such hope in the air, so much promise. But then began also the cycle: hope, hard-to-rid corruption, the Orange Revolution, the poisoning of Viktor Yushchenko, the pull to Europe, and in recent years of course, this growing, looming crisis, another chapter in Ukraine's so-tragic history.

Mr. Speaker, I am a quarter Ukrainian. My great-great-grandparents came to Saskatchewan, to Ituna, with my great-grandmother, Rose, who was then just a little girl, from the village of Stryi — S-t-r-y-i — in Western Ukraine, which was once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Stryi was apparently the first city in Ukraine to raise the blue over yellow, that Ukrainian national flag, in front of its town hall on March 14 at 1990, so 32 years ago, even before the formal fall of the Soviet Union. And my grandmother's name was Katya Jaworski. Her father drowned going after cattle in a slough, so her mother remarried and her last name became Timinski, so Katya Timinski.

As we know, Ukrainians are among the largest immigrant groups in Saskatchewan. And as so many people in this province have grown up as part of a very strong Ukrainian tradition — the food, the celebrations, the Christmas, the traditional dancing, the language, and of course the Orthodox Church — I have to say I was never really a part of that because my grandmother Kay, as she was known, came to somewhat distance herself from her Ukrainian background.

It's painful. We don't talk a lot about the discrimination — and certainly my grandmother would have resisted that term — that many Ukrainians, or Galicians as they were known, experienced. And of course, as immigrants they were terribly poor as everyone was, more or less. They came here with seeds, their incredible farming, incredible gardening knowledge. After all, they were experienced with a similarly cold, unforgiving climate. And their traditions, their superstitions in some cases — throwing salt over their shoulder, stringing garlic cloves around their neck when someone was sick — my granny said that other children would draw back.

But suffice it to say that for a range of reasons, her reasons, my grandmother would leave home, marry at 16, and largely leave her Ukrainian identity behind her. And she would embrace the English cooking and ways of my Grandfather Eyre's family. And I remember her telling me once, based on the Austro-Hungarian connection, she could be considered in some ways German. And at the same time she told me that her mother had made the 12-course Christmas dinners. So it was somewhat puzzling, but

it was always that way. She was Ukrainian but not, at the same time. In the end, there would be no Cyrillic letters on her gravestone.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent my Ukrainian grandmother and her people here today in the Saskatchewan legislature. I'm proud to be part-Ukrainian. Certainly my grandmother was a life force. She had a take-no-prisoners work ethic; that's for sure. She worked as a small-business owner, a hairdresser, eventually in the Senator hotel from 1943, when my grandfather went overseas, until the day she literally had a heart attack at 80. She always said she would mop floors — anything — before ever taking a cent of benefits.

She was young at heart, energetic, loved square dancing, loved car trips, had a lovely sense of style and interior design. She was a talented cook. She read, ordered box sets of classical records and encyclopedias, went to the symphony and the theatre in Saskatoon for years. She would resent though that she had not had the opportunity to go to university.

Certainly she was tough, and that's been referenced a few times. We'll just say that she knew her own mind. She could sometimes be a bit difficult. I think she would be okay with that characterization. She was a key part of the fabric of my life. Her drive, her energy are part of me. I loved her and I am richer because her family made the journey to this country. I am here.

Mr. Speaker, we must do our Ukrainian-Canadian grandparents, great-grandparents, proud, co-citizens, co-Saskatchewanians. And one major way I think we can do that is to be ever on our guard against tyranny, even casual tyranny, any chipping away at fundamental democratic foundations.

And we also have to recognize that every conflict is also political, driven by so many things, of course — religion, age-old territorial claims, territorial stealth, tyranny itself, but also politics, geopolitical strategies, competing values, competing world views. To suggest otherwise is like saying you're not interested in politics. You can say that, but politics are always interested in you.

And this current crisis is also political. It's not abstract. It has a lot to do with the politics of energy, for example, security, independence, stability. To suggest otherwise is misleading, and many Ukrainians would tell you so. So we have to be on our guard and realistically address the geopolitical facts at hand. And perhaps as the West, in this case, we should have done that sooner.

Thank you. With that, Mr. Speaker, God bless Ukraine and protect its people.

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

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An image that sits with me from the very earliest days of the conflict is of the toughness of the Ukrainian people. And I dare say I don't think Putin had any idea what he was about to run into. And that image is of people locked arm in arm, row by row, standing in front of an approaching enemy with resilience, with pride, saying: you're not coming here; you're not taking us. And that speaks to the

heart of the Ukrainian people.

I want to talk just briefly about the Ukrainian contribution in my constituency. Across my constituency from the early 1900s Ukrainian people came, settled through agriculture, forestry, and even in more recent times they've come to our land and worked in manufacturing and certainly in professions, and some have married into the communities. And we're very, very honoured and proud to have them as part of our constituency and as part of our communities.

I also want to recognize one of the more unique, I think, contributions of the Ukrainian people, and that is across this province the iconic, unique architecture of the Orthodox churches that we have in so many of our communities. And I'm just going to touch on a few of them because I think it's important that we recognize that when they arrived in Saskatchewan, through volunteer efforts entirely, through volunteer and through donations, one of the first things that the Ukrainian people did was build on their religious heritage and brought with them the very uniqueness of the churches.

[15:45]

Pay particular attention to some that were extremely unique, like Saint Michael's in Rama and of course Saint John's in Theodore. There's a number of others in larger towns: the Ukrainian Catholic church in Foam Lake, Saints Peter and Paul in Porcupine Plain, the Descent of the Holy Spirit in Wadena, Sacred Heart in Wynyard, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in Wishart, Saints Peter and Paul in Kuroki, Blessed Virgin Mary in Rose Valley, and so many others that dotted virtually every village and town and sometimes rural part across my constituency and, I know, across much of Saskatchewan. And I think that the heart of the Ukrainian people is represented in their churches and in the images inside those churches, the colours, the spirit of their church life.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the communities, there continues to be celebrations of dance, of music and art of the people of Ukraine. Many young people continue to learn Ukrainian dance, the history of Ukrainian food, clothing, and particular art forms. And something that's extremely unique and I think we've all probably dabbled with it as children, but the art form of pysanka, which is the colouring of eggs which I think, you know, certainly in early school years I think a lot of folks in Saskatchewan have had the experience of trying to create some semblance of colourful eggs, not anywhere near some of the incredible art that is represented in the Ukrainian community.

Mr. Speaker, my constituency has over 100 years of history of immigration, settlement, and celebration of the Ukrainian culture. My school years, my friends, my neighbours, my family, my community, and now my colleagues have a proud cultural connection with the people of Ukraine.

We are of course very, very concerned for the people of Ukraine. Many of our neighbours have family in the Ukraine, and our thoughts and prayers are with them at this time. My constituency fully supports the motion of support for peace and the safety of the people of Ukraine, and we will welcome them to our communities, to our businesses, and to our hearts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise today and speak in support of the motion before the House and to have the opportunity to speak on this current crisis and in solidarity with the millions of Ukrainians and those who love them, struggling in the face of this war, this unprovoked aggression, and this unfolding humanitarian crisis.

And let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. Vladimir Putin and his attack on Ukraine is the behaviour of a thug and a brute. The actions taken over the years and the rights and freedoms abused by Vladimir Putin, certainly within his own borders and outside, have been reminiscent of other terrible strongmen in history, most notably — and relevant to today's discussion — those of Joseph Stalin, responsible directly and indirectly for the death of 40 million of his own people.

And we've seen a pattern of this behaviour. Those of us who are students of current affairs or of history have seen this through a repeat of things like show trials, through the intimidation and subjugation of the free press in and outside of Russia, most notably in 2006 with the targeted killing and murder of vocal critic and reporter Anna Politkovskaya, who some members may remember was a vocal critic of the Putin regime and its war and its human rights abuses and atrocities in Chechnya and other Caucasian regions of the area. And Ms. Politkovskaya was murdered in the elevator of her own building. And that news was met, I believe quite literally, Mr. Speaker, with a wink and a nod from then president Putin.

We've seen the oppression and continued violence against minorities, whether ethnic, linguistic, racial, sexually diverse. We've seen proxy wars. And now again, as history is often wont to do, we see it repeating itself with an invasion of Ukraine. And meeting that aggression has been the courage and unity of Ukrainian people, which has been truly a remarkable thing to behold.

And I think it bears mentioning that of course these are regular people who, up until a month ago, were living their lives — going to work, driving down their streets, filling up their cars with gas, cooking dinner with their families, watching bad TV shows. My younger brother, Mr. Speaker, worked on cruise ships for a while, and one of his good friends is Ukrainian — Anton — and up until recently was living in Kharkiv.

And my brother and Anton have stayed in touch. And I remember Brodie telling me he'd spoken to Anton, being like, oh man, are you worried about what's going on with Russia? And Anton was like, no man, it's fine. We don't think it's going to be a big deal. And you know, it's probably all overblown. We're fine. I'm going to go visit my parents, and I'll come home and go to work. And his apartment building in Kharkiv was shelled, and he has now fled to Western Ukraine with his fiancée, where he's struggling and trying to get out of the country.

I know for many in Saskatchewan, I think in particular of our neighbours of Syrian or Afghan descent, for many, war has been present in their lives. But now for many of us here in Saskatchewan, now that war has come to Europe and war has come to Ukraine, this hits closer to home. It impacts our families,

it impacts our friends, it impacts many in this province, as the member for Canora-Pelly has spoken about, who still maintain those close, close ties. And war for any of us is war for all of us.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in preparing for this, I of course, you know, reflect on the comments shared by the Minister for Immigration, specifically on the openness and the generosity that this province is choosing to show to those fleeing this conflict, whether permanently or temporarily. And I applaud that. Saskatchewan is a province rich in diversity, rich in history, whether it's that of Indigenous communities and Métis communities here in Saskatchewan or those cultures which have settled here, which are newer here, such as our Ukrainian family here in Saskatchewan.

The member for Kelvington-Wadena spoke of the importance of and the symbolic beauty of the churches that still dot much of the prairie landscape. And you know, our landscape in Saskatchewan, it's a kaleidoscope. Our geography, it's a patchwork of parkland, of prairie, of badlands, and of lakes and rivers. And this patchwork, this kaleidoscope speaks to our diversity and it ensures that we are all connected. And that is nowhere more visible than in the built landscape of Saskatchewan, the built landscape in parts of the province where you can still see very visibly the history and the joy and the celebrations and the footprints of so many who came before us.

Saskatchewan and Ukraine have always had a particularly unique relationship. I didn't learn until a few weeks ago that it was Saskatchewan that was actually the first province in Canada to strike an agreement with the newly independent nation of Ukraine. It was Canada, the first country to recognize independent country of Ukraine. And of course this makes sense given our history and our close, close blood and family ties to that country.

And you know, that's evident even in our own leadership, in our own history here in this House. Former Premier Romanow was of course of Ukrainian background. He was born to Ukrainian immigrants. His father moved here not speaking English and worked for the rail lines. And for the Premier of this province to have grown up not speaking English as his first language, to have grown up in a province of opportunity and promise and boldness, a province that was tolerant and imaginative and embracing, the success of newcomers like former Premier Romanow truly speaks to the best opportunity that we have here in this province and speaks to the best of Saskatchewan.

You know, I've been a student of history for some time, and you know, as critic for Immigration have been following these terrible developments quite closely. But I haven't been as familiar with some of the more recent history, the more recent ties between Saskatchewan and Ukraine. And I've really learned so much in the past two weeks through this terrible, terrible crisis and war.

And when we talk about the need to ensure that Ukrainian people fleeing persecution are supported and protected, that is critical when it comes to conversations around what essentially boils down to mercy, and whether there is a limit to our compassion or our mercy for fellow men and women and children in dire, dire circumstances fleeing for their lives, hiding in shelters, babies being born in subway tunnels.

We've all seen the images, Mr. Speaker, and none of us can imagine living those experiences, dragged so suddenly from our everyday life. But when we condemn this wholly unprovoked and wanton invasion of Ukraine, we must as well — and I'm so glad to hear — have hand in hand with it that mercy and that compassion and that unequivocal support for those fleeing injustice, for those fleeing violence, and for those potentially, potentially looking to move here and raise their families.

Mr. Speaker, in times of crisis and in times of true real conflict, like we say today, it is the time for solidarity as Canadians. It is not a time for left or for right. It is a time to stand arm in arm and stand up against what is wrong and stand for what is right. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks in support of the motion.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Bonk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll begin my remarks today as I should, by showing my complete support for the motion that's been put forward today. I grew up like many in Saskatchewan with a lot of Ukrainian friends. In fact the very first Ukrainian settlement in Saskatchewan, which was pre-1880, is in Grenfell, which was very close to where I grew up, and there are still a lot of Ukrainian descendants there today.

[16:00]

The impact that the Ukrainian people have had in Saskatchewan has been referenced many times already today. Their contributions, particularly in agriculture, at the beginning of the history of this province, it's the hard work that a lot of the Ukrainian immigrants put forward to open up this land, to settle it, to make a province. They were here at the beginning of our province in 1905. They had already been here for many, many years. They're part of this province.

Growing up — at the start of my business career, I guess, or my international career — I owe a lot of that to a Ukrainian family, the Warnyca family, just south of Montmartre. They taught me a lot about business, particularly international business, because they were one of the absolute top livestock breeders in the world. They raised Hereford cattle. They'd won the world Hereford congress many times. Just as good as it comes, not only in business but as people, and they taught me a lot how to deal with international delegations and groups that came through. And that was sort of my first foray into international business.

In fact actually Gerry Luciuk, from SURAC, him and I have gone on a lot of international trade missions together. We've hosted a lot of delegations in Saskatchewan here together. I've known him for a long time, and he's such a strong advocate for Saskatchewan and for Ukraine. And people like that are people that we need to celebrate, especially at times like this when it's . . . I don't even know how to explain the circumstances that we're in.

My own family, Mr. Speaker, my grandfather was born in Lviv or Lemberg as they called it, which is on the western side of Ukraine. He was Prussian but they were born in Galicia, which is a part of I guess modern-day Ukraine. And it was an interesting part of the world at that time because my grandfather, of course he was of German descent but he spoke Polish, he spoke Ukrainian, he spoke German. Came to Canada, learned English

of course and settled near Grenfell. And that whole German, Polish, Ukrainian community, they all got along. They all came from the same part of the world, and they understood each other very much.

I have to say, my wife's family, my wife's mother, she comes from a part of Ukraine called Transcarpathia. Transcarpathia is actually traditionally Hungarian land but was ceded to Ukraine in the Treaty of Trianon in 1920 when they broke up the Austro-Hungarian Empire. My wife's family, some of them live right in a village called Lónya, and then there's people that live in a village called Batrad'. The border runs right between the two.

During the Communist era, that was the border between . . . that was the Iron Curtain. So you had family members who can see each other from village to village, which was two kilometres away, but could not talk to each other for almost 60 years. Just amazing, that part of the world, what those people had to go through.

I'm proud to say that most of my wife's, happy to say that most of my wife's family that we know has gotten safe passage into Hungary, and everyone's safe and sound. And they are working tirelessly to welcome immigrants from Ukraine into Hungary and make sure that they are well looked after. And I know the Hungarian government is doing all they can to help in the humanitarian effort there.

Personally, I've had a long history with Ukraine. The first time I went to the Ukraine was in 1998. I've worked there for many, many years, particularly in livestock genetics and business management. We have sent a lot of live cattle from Saskatchewan. We've sent semen, embryos, live cattle equipment to farms in the Ukraine.

And if you're in the Ukraine, especially in some parts of the Ukraine, if you were put there in the middle of the night and you woke up in the morning and you looked around, you would not know if you are in Saskatchewan or if you are in Ukraine. It looks almost the same. The landscape is the same and the climate is the same, but most of all, the Ukrainian people are some of the kindest, most hospitable, nicest people you will ever meet anywhere you go.

One thing I would like to mention, I've also spent a lot of time working in Russia, maybe actually more time working in Russia. And I just want to make sure that everyone does not conflate this conflict between Putin and the Russian people. The Russian people do not support this, and they are also some of the nicest, kindest, hardest working people you will ever meet. So I just want to be very clear. Please draw a distinction between the regime in Russia and the people of Russia. They're just some amazing, good people.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what more to say in a situation like this, when it's unimaginable what's happening. Actually while we were sitting here today during question period and through some of these speeches, I've been texting back and forth with a friend of mine, Yulia. Yulia right now is in downtown Kyiv in her apartment that she has not been able to leave since the invasion started. The other day I was texting with her and she said, well I'm going to have to do something soon because I'm running out of food, and I can't leave my apartment

because there's snipers. And she said, I think I'm going to have to start breaking into the other flats in my building just so I can get food. The situation is . . . it's real. I was there in 2014 with her down in Maidan Square, right after the Crimean invasion.

I know these people. I know the city. It's so hard to believe that this is happening in what I would term a very modern metropolitan city in a developed nation. It's unimaginable. I hope that everyone here doesn't just accept this or think of this as, oh, something that's happening half a world away. These are people just like us, people who a lot of us know, where we know their families.

Mr. Speaker, I just hope that there's a swift resolution to this. I hope that the people of Ukraine understand and know that we are behind them. And actually it was one of the questions I asked Yulia. I said, I have to speak up, speak in the legislature today on this subject, and what would you like the people of Saskatchewan to know?

And she said, one is that the support that you're showing means more to us than you can ever imagine, just to know that there's other people out there that are thinking of us and understanding what's going on. And the other thing she said is she said, I hope that there can be pressure, that the humanitarian corridors are safe because right now they don't seem to be. And that's the lifeline for a lot of people, not only just to get supplies in, but also to get people out.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I just want to show my unwavering support for the people of Ukraine, and long live Ukraine.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed an honour to participate in this debate, so critical in view of the Russian desecration of Ukraine. Mr. Speaker, this affects my very being. I'm a Doukhobor, raised by pacifist parents and a great-grandson of refugees persecuted by Russia for their faith. War and warfare are anathema to me. Those familiar with my hockey and football days may question my adherence to this belief. However, apparent as direct force may be, I am also conscious of the statement that sometimes there needs to be more fist in pacifist.

Bullies like Vladimir Putin are not deterred by colourful verbal praises and gestures of good intent. They are not also not deterred by logic or meaningful comments. They are deterred by repercussions that outweigh the results of their bullying. So why does this matter to us here in Saskatchewan? Why are we debating actions of two countries not our own? Because, Mr. Speaker, our ties to Ukraine are multiple and intensive. Because, Mr. Speaker, our support can help stop the bully Putin.

For Doukhobors, Ukraine and Ukrainians carry both historical and neighbourly ties. Part of our religious group was exiled to Ukraine because of their refusal to fight for the Russian army. They then came to Canada, free to exercise their conscience. Here the Canadian government of the day selected Doukhobors, Ukrainians, Mennonites, and others who they felt were great farmers and could consolidate the settlement of the prairies for the new country, Canada.

As all of our pioneers knew, that meant working together and supporting one another in the isolation and often forbidding climate. Bonds grew stronger.

One of the many results of that settlement is that then and now Ukraine and Canada's prairies are considered the breadbaskets of the world. Given Mr. Putin's penchant for starving children and their parents into submission, it means that a time of massive food shortages in the world, the very land on which Ukraine sits needs our support.

Supports of brothers and sisters is a basic tenet of Doukhobor faith. The Ukrainian people are indeed our brothers and sisters. Support of the democratic way of life is a basic tenet of our Saskatchewan and Canadian mindset. Ukrainians stand to lose their democracy and their lives. Mr. Putin has no idea or notion of a democratic legislature such as ours.

So as a legislature, what can we do to mitigate the onslaught of the Russian machine? First, we can unanimously support this motion raised by the Premier on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. It is important that we let our constituents know that we welcome each and every one of their individual efforts to help.

Second, as individual legislatures, we can also provide constituents with information on possible things they can do to help, and especially how they can do them. Here are a couple of suggestions: we in our communities can make donations to the Red Cross Canada, Save the Children Canada, UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund] Canada, the Saskatchewan branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, and other on-the-ground, established humanitarian support groups. As legislators, to expedite these donations we can post the addresses on our websites, send them out on our email lists, newsletters, and Facebook sites.

Secondly, for groups such as faith communities or community organizations, they could sponsor a refugee family. This is a long-term commitment, but the benefits work both ways to be sure.

In that regard, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you about my Blaine Lake home community. In a previous humanitarian crisis, one family, the John Konkin family, sponsored refugees to our town with the support of many community organizations. The refugees, Dr. Fedoroff and his family, became part of the lifeblood of our local community. Their son was later responsible for research leading to some of our province's most successful cancer treatments. Many of you may have met Sergey Fedoroff. The point, Mr. Speaker, is clear. Save one family and you save a community. Save a community and you can save a country. Let's do that for Ukraine, Mr. Speaker.

Sadly today's Russia could have been a democracy and this war, so heartbreaking as it is, could have been averted. Presidents Gorbachev and Yeltsin grew a culture of democracy in Russia. Putin upended it. But those other leaders sowed the seeds of free thinking as shown today by the brave, brave demonstrations taking place in Russia itself. Just think: we might have had a democratic Russia and a free Ukraine today. Mr. Speaker, democracy is a struggle, but it's worth the pain and it's worth the price.

As a young parliamentary page in the House of Commons, I was inspired by debates that took public policy and that raised both the flag and the fist for democracy. I had the opportunity to hear first-hand British prime minister Margaret Thatcher and US [United States] president Ronald Reagan speak of democratic ideals. I'm still inspired.

And as a member of this House of democracy here in Saskatchewan, I have learned to realize how fragile the flower of freedom can be in a sea of dissent. Each of us can make a difference individually, but collectively we can make a huge and lasting difference, Mr. Speaker. I have also learned that when we stand shoulder to shoulder and co-operate to find solutions we can be invincible. Mr. Speaker, let's stand together now and vote for the preservation of the people and the country of Ukraine.

[16:15]

This beloved province of ours has survived past flu epidemics, past droughts and the locusts that descended, past and present extreme winters, past crop failures, children that had to leave Saskatchewan to find their futures, and past wars marked by the cemeteries in each and every village and town in our province. Mr. Speaker, despite that, we remain a province of survivors. Saskatchewan is a success story displaying courage and resilience. Our souls are bonded with Ukraine, and so they should be.

Mr. Speaker, God bless Canada. God bless Saskatchewan. God bless Ukraine. Slava Ukraine.

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

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand here today in support of the motion that has been put forward and the people of Ukraine. I am not of Ukrainian descent nor was I raised in a Ukrainian community, but my current community of Prince Albert has an active and a vibrant Ukrainian community. And it was to the absolute dismay and heartbreak to everyone when on February 24th, Russia invaded the free and democratic nation of Ukraine over what Vladimir Putin claimed was a constant threat from modern Ukraine.

With the technology we have available today, this war is being broadcast worldwide, and we are bearing witness to the destruction of Ukraine and the mass exodus of 1.5 million Ukrainian citizens, and reports of several thousands of innocent people who have died thus far and the prospect that many more may perish. Daily we see first-hand the bombed government buildings and residential buildings. We witness the devastation of Ukrainian citizens as they abandon their homes and flee their country. We watch the lines of people as they make their way to borders, seeking safety in neighbouring countries. And we see families torn apart as husbands and fathers are staying back behind to fight and protect their homeland.

I have seen news stories showing doctors and nurses caring for the wounded using only the lights from their cell phones. A most moving broadcast was of a mom and her two little girls who looked so tired and so afraid, and the poor mother spoke in disbelief about how she felt was happening to her country. And she showed pictures of her little daughters who, just one week

earlier, had been in a dance competition. And, Mr. Speaker, we are also seeing the arrest of many Russian citizens as they protest in defiance of this unconscionable act of war by Vladimir Putin.

People across Saskatchewan are reaching out and doing what they can to support the Ukrainian people. There are approximately 144,000 Saskatchewan Ukrainian people, or 13 per cent of our population, who make their home in our province, people who are descendants of those or who immigrated to Canada for better opportunities.

Lana from Beauty Code right here in Regina, is an example of this. She is a native of the Ukraine and her family immigrated here under the Saskatchewan immigration nominee program. Lana last week was collected emergency items — baby formulas, diapers, food, blankets, anything she could send back to her homeland. And she's in constant contact with her Ukrainian family and calls them regularly to see how they are doing and for updates on the attacks.

Rawlco Radio once again showed the generosity and compassion of our Saskatchewan people when over \$1 million was raised to support Ukraine. Communities across the province are holding rallies in support of Ukraine and its people. I was very pleased to attend the rally in Prince Albert last Thursday with the MLA from Prince Albert Carlton.

Mr. Speaker, the autocratic leadership of Vladimir Putin has led to this unprovoked attack on the democratic and sovereign country of Ukraine. Vladimir Putin has put the lives of the people of Ukraine in extreme peril and threatens our values of freedom, democracy, and self-determination. Mr. Speaker, I will fully be supporting the motion later today. Thank you.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today and thinking about this in a position I didn't think I'd have to do in this House, and it is to condemn another country for what they're doing to their neighbouring country. It is Putin who is a dictator, an awful, awful dictator sending troops into a free and democratic society where many across Saskatchewan have their roots.

We look around; we listen to the members that have roots in Ukraine, where their families came from. I take a look at my wedding party where two of my groomsmen were two generations away from coming from Ukraine. I take a look at South Hill, the neighbourhood I represent in Moose Jaw. It is a huge Ukrainian population.

I have both a Ukrainian Catholic Orthodox church and another Ukrainian church, both in my riding — a huge Ukrainian family right there. I hear stories of how they used to have suppers at least once a month and people from all over Moose Jaw would gather to these churches and partake in what we all thought were Saskatchewan foods — our perogies, our sausage, our cabbage rolls.

It is absolutely horrible what's happening there. We don't even have to watch it on the news. We can go to a Twitter feed. We can go to a Facebook feed. I was watching an online news channel this morning, and he's not just fighting the soldiers; he's

bombing civilians. He's trying to take out bridges that are the way out for these people in Ukraine. 1.5 million people have already left the country. So think about that. That is our province emptying out and more. Empty.

What is it? Fourteen per cent we said of Saskatchewan's people have Ukrainian descent? We all have Ukrainian friends. This hits us hard in the heart. This hits us. It hits our families, it hits our friends, and it hits us here in this House. It is not often that both sides of this House will agree on a motion, and we're both wholeheartedly standing behind this motion, seeing what we can do to stand up for our friends in Ukraine.

You take a look at just the human tragedy that is happening over there. Right now as we speak, their legislators are taking up arms. I look around the House and I wonder if we would be able to do that. We have young families here. We have people with little children. We have a lot of folks that I know would stand up. But right there, they were handing out weapons to their civilians to stand up to Russia's onslaught. They haven't forgotten what it was like for life under Russia and the other dictators that run there. And I agree with my colleagues — it's not the Russian people; it is a few in the Russian government.

I am glad for what our federal government is doing, stepping up and putting sanctions in place against Russian products. I would like to see more — all Russian products stopped from coming here until this conflict is over. I take a look around, what we've done in our province already, and wonder what can we do more. We're sending funds from our taxpayers over there, matching as well. And we take a look at the heartfelt response for people across this province. They step up; they give.

I think of some of the emails that have come into my office, Mr. Speaker. I had a retired military gentleman that I've known for years, since my time in Estevan, who has now retired from the military, who has opened up his home to Ukrainian refugees. I've had people emailing my office wondering what else they can do, whether or not they can go over there and help support the Ukrainian people.

Mr. Speaker, we all pray for the Ukrainian people. We all hope for the best. This dictator, this . . . I don't even want to call him a person, this thing that's running Russia, you think of the disgust that the world has for this man right now. And you take a look around here and we're in unison, in solidarity. And I am so happy to see that this House together, together will stand against what Putin represents and the atrocities committed in Ukraine right now.

It is absolutely horrible what's going on there. I can't state that enough. The pictures you see, the newscasts we see, it is a strain on our souls thinking of the people fighting over there. I will stand in full support with the motion that the Premier put forward, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the people of Moose Jaw Wakamow for giving me this opportunity to speak in support of the Ukrainian people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to join this important debate. At a time when we often see too much division

in this legislature and right across our province, it's good that we can come together and recognize an issue, a reality on which we can all agree to use our collective voice on behalf of all Saskatchewan people and declare our united and full support for the people of Ukraine.

This is a time to come together and act decisively in the face of evil. There is no room for equivocation on this. Putin's violent invasion of Ukraine is, as the motion states, unprovoked and unjustified. For the tens of millions of Ukrainians fighting for and fleeing from their country, we must act as one.

And for those with family members around the world with strong Ukrainian roots, including more than the 100,000 people living in our province with a connection to Ukraine, this is not an academic discussion. It is a tragedy and terrifying reality that has invaded their homes and their every thought. My heart breaks and our heart breaks for the Ukrainian people and for those families so impacted right across Saskatchewan.

The fear, the inability to know how family members half a world away are faring, the questions and conversations with young children, sleepless nights and endless days waiting to hear something, anything. It is so much to bear, the fear and the anger. We must not, and we will not, let them bear it alone.

This weekend I had the opportunity to meet with a young woman named Anastasiia. She was draped in the yellow and blue of the Ukrainian flag at a Women's Day event here in Regina. She spoke with conviction and passion, spoke of friends and family back home. But, Mr. Speaker, you could see the fear and the concern in her eyes.

[16:30]

Anastasiia is a scholar with a busy workload, but she could not, like so many others, just sit by in the comfort and the peace that we enjoy here in Saskatchewan, a peace that we can never take for granted. She could not stand by and has been busy organizing rallies and speaking out while she spends nights calling back home, doing all that she can.

And we must all do everything we can. We are in a unique position in this province as elected officials to be able to make decisions needed and take the action needed in the face of this violent invasion. This is especially so, Mr. Speaker, when we speak with one voice.

There are many families, people like Anastasiia, facing that added fear of what this all means for their loved ones. And of course the impacts are most felt by and most devastating for those still in or fleeing Ukraine and those with loved ones under threat of danger.

But the impacts of this unprovoked illegal attack are being felt around the world and here at home in Canada, in Saskatchewan: rising prices that are hitting us all, and some families harder than others. It is my hope that all of us commit to taking the passage of this united statement today — and I believe it will pass in a united fashion — then taking that statement and taking action that will really help people.

I applaud actions great and small that have already been taken,

and I hope that the government will agree to taking further action leveraging our trade offices, trade missions, and other organizations, like the Saskatchewan Trade and Export organization, to pressure countries relying on Russian potash, grains, and energy. Saskatchewan can and should deliver for these countries and hamstring Putin's ability to finance his invasion and his war.

We can and should welcome more people here. We all know, and we've heard today, Saskatchewan has a long and rich history with the people of Ukraine, and we should continue to call on the federal government to expedite visa applications. Increasing supports for refugee settlement programs must be a priority.

Recently my colleague from Rosemont, and most recently Mayor Masters, called for action to work together with all government partners to force Russian oligarchs to divest from Evraz. Mr. Speaker, these solutions will not be easy, but we must work together to find solutions. The challenge for governments to make this happen is nothing compared to the challenges faced by the hundreds of families who will have to figure out how to get by if there is a shutdown of any kind. These workers, proud USW [United Steelworkers] members, must be included at these tables and included in the decision making.

I could go on. And I'm sure that there are good ideas on both sides of this House and right across our province of how we can move forward from these important words into action. Nothing should be off the table.

Mr. Speaker, military experts are pointing out that we are closer to a third world war than we have been in over half a century. This is a threat that some of us knew as children, and this is a threat that I hoped my children and no other child would ever have to face.

Saskatchewan people and the world are counting on us to work together and to deliver. Today, Mr. Speaker, we are saying the right things — and I've heard the speeches from members on both sides — and we need to do the right things. Let's be inspired by the generosity and the unity displayed this weekend, donations big and small to TeleMiracle. That is the Saskatchewan that I know and I love. Let's put that prairie spirit to work.

It's my hope that when we leave this place, we build on the strength that we only have when we work together. Let's deliver for the people who sent us here and stand united in support of Ukraine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to support the motion. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan fully condemns the invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

After months of staging troops and military equipment along the Ukraine-Russia border, Putin's regime invaded Ukraine on February 24th, 2022. This was an unprovoked attack on a free, democratic country and is being denounced by Saskatchewan, Canada, and numerous countries around the world.

As the war continues, more and more people are displaced from their home and country of Ukraine. The horrors of war are seen

daily as Russian troops advance across Ukraine: deaths, injuries, and destruction; residential buildings being hit with Russian missiles, causing irreparable damage to infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, many Ukrainian people have stayed behind to fight and protect their homeland. Some have taken their families safely out of Ukraine and returned to take up arms and fight the Russian invasion.

As the number of people fleeing Ukraine grows to more than one and a half million, Saskatchewan is here to welcome any that need a friendly, welcoming home. We are working with the Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations advisory committee to help with any and all efforts to support the Ukraine and its people. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan has provided \$100,000 to support humanitarian efforts. SaskTel has waived long-distance and text-messaging fees from Canada to Ukraine and roaming charges for those in Ukraine.

Saskatchewan has approximately 15 per cent of its population with ancestral roots in Ukraine. They settled in many parts of the province and were major contributors to building our province. We continue to communicate with the federal government regarding Saskatchewan's willingness to accept displaced Ukrainians.

There are two immigration streams for Ukrainians to settle in Canada. The fastest and most efficient option is the Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel. The other option is the family reunification sponsorship pathway for permanent residents and immediate and extended family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents. Saskatchewan is ready, willing, and able to accept Ukrainian immigrants.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is fully supportive of the economic sanctions placed on Russia and its leaders. To further place financial pressure on Russia, we encourage Canada, the United States of America, and other countries around the world to stop purchasing crude oil and oil products from Russia. There is no need to aid in financing Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan stands with Ukraine. Ukraine's flag will fly indefinitely outside the Legislative Building. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those impacted by this needless war. Thank you. God bless.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to support the emergency motion that has been put forward today for debate.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of the constituency of Melville-Saltcoats overwhelmingly support the efforts that our government has put forward to this date in support of the Ukrainian people, sovereignty, and their territorial integrity. Mr. Speaker, our constituency, like so many in Saskatchewan, has a tremendous diaspora of ethnic diversity. In Esterhazy alone we have over 50 different dialects that have been detected in our elementary school. We have many communities that have a strong ethnic background, such as the Germans and Belgians in Langenburg, or the Scandinavians in Churchbridge, or the Scottish in Saltcoats, each having their unique reasons as to why their first residents moved and settled in their area.

In Saskatchewan the first Ukrainian settlements were established in the Montmartre-Candiac area by 1895-96, and in 1897 around Yorkton, notably in the districts of Beaver Hills, Crooked Lake, and Wroxton, the last two communities in my constituency. Ukrainians were attracted to Canada by the promise of free land, homesteads of 160 acres. The legacy of our first Ukrainian residents are still in our communities today, evident by the spires of the Ukrainian Orthodox churches that still remain in many of these communities. Our hockey and curling rinks in our constituency still have some of the best borscht soup, some of the best perogies and holubtsi that are all parts, integral parts of the menus in our arenas.

After each world war, those areas that had a dominant Ukrainian presence benefited from further immigration, and those communities continued to thrive and expand. It was the same reason as we are experiencing here today that Ukrainians continue to come to Canada, and in particular Saskatchewan. They came for a new start, to escape persecution, and integrate into their new communities with their new-found friends.

Our constituency continues to realize the value of Ukrainians as we have a number employed in businesses in the area, from production line welders at our local farm equipment manufacturer, Bridgeview Manufacturing, to tradespeople in the local construction companies like Noble Construction, to employees at Mosaic and Nutrien potash mines; to nursing homes, hospitals, and even making sandwiches at Subway, each coming here to make their own history but proud of their heritage and where they came from.

It was the same conversation that I had with Val at the hockey rink in Melville Friday night. She was telling me the story of why she and her husband decided to come to Canada eight years ago from eastern Ukraine. They're a younger couple, in their early 30s when they first arrived in Lemberg, and they have since moved to Melville. She works at the care home in Melville. Her husband is an electrician.

They had their reasons for leaving Ukraine but were furiously proud of their heritage and where they were from. However it didn't take us long to talk about the atrocities that her family and friends who remained in the Ukraine were dealing with on a daily basis. Showing emotion, she had to show me the pictures on her cell phone that her friends and family were sending her of places that were landmarks or buildings that they hung out at as kids, that were demolished the day before or even that morning that she had pictures sent to her.

She tried to provide me some perspective as to how that would relate to us in east central Saskatchewan. She talked about the rink that we were sitting in that was eerily similar to one in her hometown of Ukraine that was standing one day, completely demolished the next, taken out by Russian tanks. Or the town square, very similar to the ones that we have in many of our communities, that existed that morning but were gone by noon, destroyed by a mortar attack. Or a friend who operated a day care and who was so full of anguish not knowing where all of her students were that day, not knowing if they were with their families, on the run, or . . . And she couldn't finish that sentence, Mr. Speaker. All I could do was give her a hug and say that we, her new community, her home in Saskatchewan, will be here to help support her, her family, her friends, and her relatives as best

we can.

I cannot possibly try to understand the pain and anguish that any one of our friends, our colleagues, or constituents must be feeling right now, not knowing where their family members are, what they're facing, not knowing if the homes and the communities that they've worked so hard to build and establish are going to be there when they get back — if they get back.

Honestly I'm not sure what I'm going to tell my seven-year-old granddaughter when she asks, why are they doing this to each other? Why are they shooting at each other? What I can do is I can tell her, reassure her and many others that we're going to do what we can to ensure that we help as many people as we can because that is what we do here in Saskatchewan.

Our Minister of Immigration and Career Training has published quite an extensive list of the support and help that we can and are offering to those here and to those that will be coming here, and those that are going to be coming here to escape, honestly, the brutal action by Putin's regime. We, through this motion here today, can add to a growing list of governments the world over that can exert the influences that we have to stop Russia from their continued disregard for democracy and end their brutal invasion and occupation of Ukraine. Because that is what we can do to help Valry, Mykhaila, Andriy, Dymtrus, and many others from Ukraine who live in our constituencies and in their home country back home. May God be with you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity today to put a few remarks on the record with respect to the motion that we are all speaking to here this afternoon, the motion that reads as follows:

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 operations within Ukraine immediately.

[16:45]

Mr. Speaker, it's nearly unbelievable what's happening across the globe today. And you know, I think back to a time when years ago, you know, we would catch the news at 6 o'clock at night or the newspaper the next day. But in today's world of social media and the internet and cell phones, we're constantly receiving updates as to what's happening overseas and seeing first-hand just how unbelievable it is, what is happening across the globe, and the atrocities being committed by Putin and his government on the good people of Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, it's something that I don't think any of us thought or hoped we would ever have to see or deal with in our lifetimes and that's I think what also makes it as shocking as it is.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard from many members on both sides today about the deep connections that the people of Saskatchewan and this province has with the people of Ukraine

and why it is as important that it is historically, Mr. Speaker, and also looking at, you know, some of the initiatives that have been undertaken already by the provincial government and by the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, to support our Ukrainian friends and families and neighbours who make up such a broad part of so many of our communities today.

Mr. Speaker, I'm fortunate to serve as the MLA for Swift Current and honoured to do so and honoured to speak about some of the initiatives that have taken place just over the past couple of weeks in the city of Swift Current and southwest Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there has been an overwhelming amount of local support in Swift Current. On Sunday, February 27th, there was a rally organized at Market Square in Swift Current which, Mr. Speaker, in the summertime is a busy place. It's a place where the farmers' market happens regularly but it's also a place where there are a number of organizations and groups that host rallies of support for a number of causes. And on February 27th that was the site of a rally organized in Swift Current, one of several, I think, and more to come, Mr. Speaker.

In the local news there is a report about that rally where they interviewed a fellow who immigrated from Ukraine, and Myron Shtan is his name, and he worked with other immigrants and locals to help organize the event. He and his wife both still have family back in Ukraine who are unable to leave the conflict. They can't get away from their country. He says, and I quote:

I have family. My wife also has family around where lots of fighting is near. I have an apartment there. Near my apartment came a rocket so it's really dangerous. There are people sleeping in basements and subways and they are surviving there.

Shtan immigrated to Swift Current about two years ago from Ukraine and he is saying that he's thinking about going back to join the fight, to defend his country, and to join his colleagues back home, to help them in the fight against Russia. And it's something that I think so many of us have a hard time wrapping our heads around, Mr. Speaker.

He also said, and I quote, "And this really hits home for us, I think, as to how serious this is overseas." Shtan says, and I quote, "Stop killing people. Stop killing kids. They're killing everything." And that is just unfathomable, Mr. Speaker, that that is what is happening in Myron's home country.

Mr. Speaker, on Saturday I was invited to attend another local gathering, this one hosted by the Newcomer Welcome Centre in Swift Current where they hosted not only an information session but also a gathering of support for Ukrainian friends and families that now call Swift Current and southwest Saskatchewan home. And I thank the Newcomer Welcome Centre for organizing this session where they had approximately 50 people from, not just Swift Current, but across southwest Saskatchewan show up to provide their support and share information about how they can support their friends and neighbours who are from Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, at this particular event there was a fellow there and I had a chance to speak to him briefly. The gentleman's name is Vlad Bondarenko and Vlad is from the Sumy region near the Russian border. Vlad immigrated to Swift Current about a year

and a half ago. He's actually living near Ponteix and working on a farm there. Vlad still has family there, he tells me. He said to me that he actually went home for Christmas and got a chance to visit his parents and some of his other family members. And that wasn't that long ago, a couple of months ago or so, Mr. Speaker, when Vlad had an opportunity to go back to Ukraine to see his family. And today he tells me his family, his parents, they're hiding in the basement. Hiding from the bombs that are dropping from overhead. Hiding from the conflict that is occurring in their country at this very moment as we speak. And I just simply have a hard time imagining that, Mr. Speaker.

I had a chance, as many of us did, to visit my family back at Christmastime, but they are not in any sort of situation nearly as serious as what Vlad and his family are faced with in Ukraine at this very moment, Mr. Speaker. He said, Mr. Speaker, he worries for his family, and it's difficult for him to be here in Canada knowing that this is what his family, his friends, and his relatives back in Ukraine are seeing on a daily basis.

And I credit people like Myron and Vlad who are working very hard and are very concerned about what is happening overseas, but are working hard here locally to help provide support. Vlad says they've been working with a Ukrainian-owned moving company here in Regina to send donated goods straight to the Ukrainian border shared with Poland. And on Saturday he was encouraging the crowd gathered at the welcome centre to do that — whether it's financial donations, to provide things like blankets, non-perishable goods that might be required in Ukraine, anything that can be utilized; first aid kits as well he said, Mr. Speaker — to help provide support to his counterparts, to his countrymen and women back home.

Mr. Speaker, I think that speaks to just how serious this is, and why I think we are all united in this Assembly here today, united in Saskatchewan in our support for the good people of Ukraine and doing whatever we can to help them through this conflict.

Mr. Speaker, there are many others who I know want to speak to the motion today, and so I thank you for the time to get a few remarks on the record. And I, of course, will be supporting the motion which we will be voting on a little bit later today, Mr. Speaker. We all stand with Ukraine in this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not a Ukrainian, however I have many Ukrainian friends, colleagues, and even extended family in my life. Over the years I've heard so many interesting stories from some friends and extended family that have been here for a very long time: that their parents and grandparents had come over 100 years ago. It reminded me of my father, and yet so much worse. My father — and I've said this in this House before — hand-dug the basement of our first house to get some extra bedrooms because it was only a one-bedroom house for five kids. And the story I'm referring to is where one of the grandparents had actually dug a hole in the side of a hill and made a makeshift shelter in order to acquire the land, stay there for a year, live off the land in order to acquire the land in this province.

And that is just one of many, many stories of the strength and resilience of Ukrainian people in our province. And we don't have to look very far. In every one of us there's a connection. And this is, I believe, why our province is so strongly, and the country is so strong in support of Ukraine. With almost 15 per cent of our population of Ukrainian descent, we don't have to look very far to find people that have friends, family and are from Ukraine.

Listening daily to the reports . . . As one of my colleagues said earlier, we used to get the news at the end of the day or read it in the paper; now we get it by the minute. And it just, again, speaks to the resilience and the strength of the people from Ukraine. Accountants, everyday people going in and becoming welders and fabricators to block the tanks or whatever it is they're doing, the Molotov cocktails. Just the fact that they are not scared to stand up. And look what they have been doing and have done.

Last week I had a few opportunities to join with the Ukrainian congress of Canada, Saskatoon chapter, one event with several of my colleagues. I was able to speak at one of them. I had the honour to speak at one of them, as well as my colleagues, say a few words at the next event. And it was my absolute honour to be able to stand with Ukraine at city hall in Saskatoon.

Just another little bit of a background on our Saskatchewan people. Something that I've been getting over the last couple of weeks has been just astounding, and it's so many calls from constituents, friends, again extended family. And I couldn't be more proud of our government and our Minister of Immigration for his incredible work to extend our province to the Ukrainian people as refugees or immigration status or whatever it may be. We want to help facilitate immigration and refugees to this province as soon as possible and for as many as possible.

So many people are offering up, saying they have extra rooms in their home, or they even have a home that's for sale and they're thinking about taking it off the market to keep it open for some Ukrainian people that might be able to come here.

Again another thing that just shows the Saskatchewan people's commitment to the people of Ukraine is the Rawlco Radio Day of Caring. Just the fact that we have such good organizations in our province that get together and raised over \$1 million — I think it was even over \$1.1 million — in one day for the people of Ukraine.

At the meeting downtown I met, and some of my colleagues also met, three individuals that actually used to be in the Ukrainian army, and they had immigrated here in 2015 and 2016. And they wanted to get on that first flight back to Ukraine to go fight for their army and fight for their country.

I absolutely cannot imagine what the Ukrainian people are going through right now on a daily basis. Sometimes they have days, and some are even more than a week before they talk to their friends and family in Ukraine. Our hearts and our prayers are with all Ukrainians. And I will absolutely be supporting the motion on behalf of the great constituency of Saskatoon Riversdale. We denounce Putin and support Ukraine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — [The hon. member spoke for a time in Saulteaux.]

I just want to say I acknowledge everyone in this room, and I am grateful to have this opportunity to stand and say a few words.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak in support of the Ukrainian people and what they are going through today. I also want to speak about this scarf and the scarves I wear regularly in this House. You'll all see that my female colleagues and I are wearing these scarves. They have meaning for us. These scarves, for Indigenous people, we call them kohkom scarves. They were adopted by my ancestors and are often referred to as kohkom scarves.

The Speaker: — Thank you, Member. We've reached our recession, so we'll be back at 7 p.m. and you'll have the floor at that time. We are now recessed. Thank you.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

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