



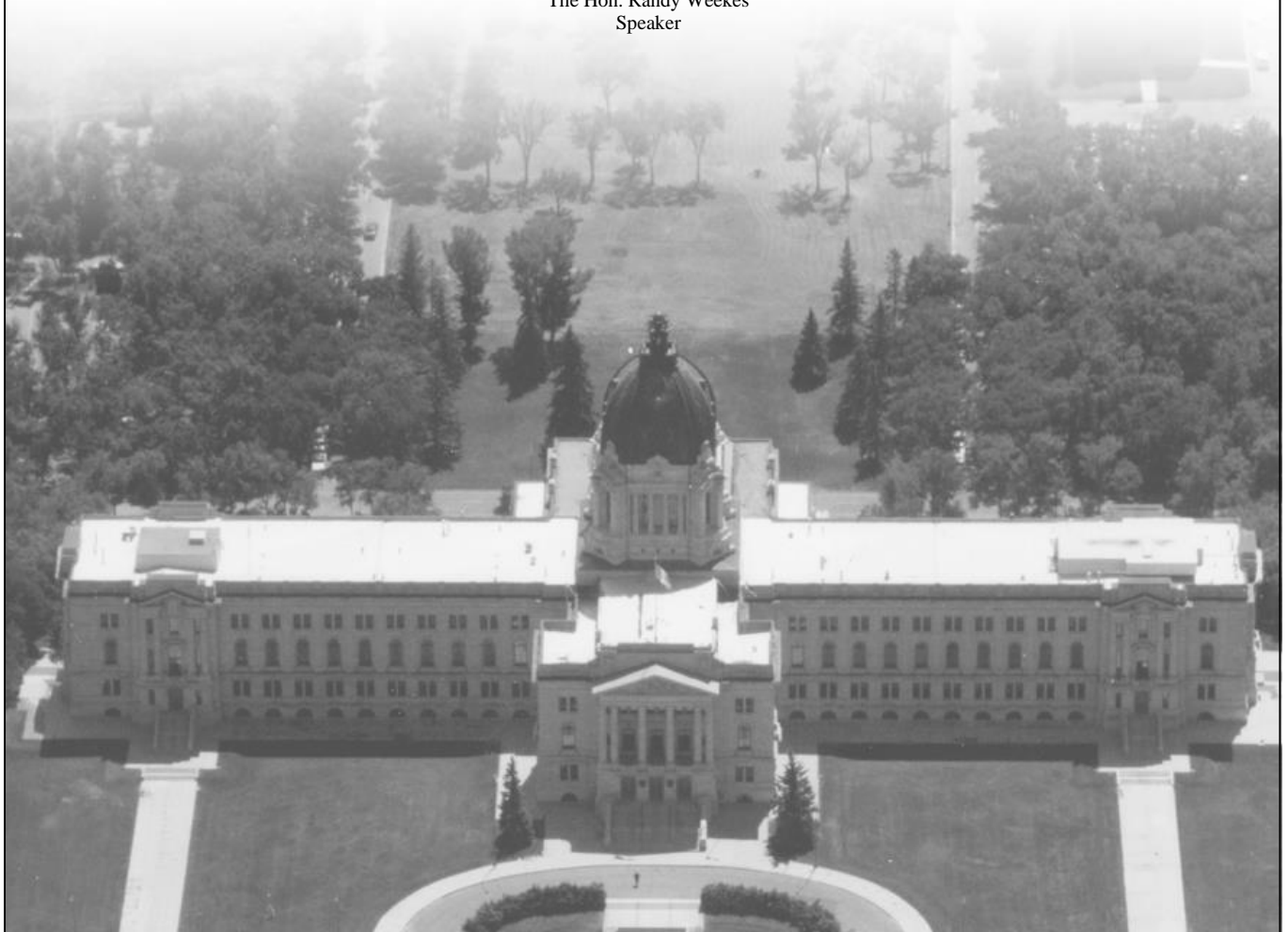
SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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)
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Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)	McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
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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)
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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

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Deputy Clerk — Iris Lang

Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyak

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I have an introduction. In the Speaker's gallery there are 18 grade 12 students from the Hague High School, and they are accompanied by their teachers, Jaren Vetter and Tanner Tyndall. And please welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on my feet here today to present a petition calling for real action to fight climate change. Last week there was an IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] report that presented some very dire conclusions, indicating that half the world's population is already vulnerable to increasingly dangerous climate impacts; and that a third to a half of the planet needs to be conserved and protected to ensure future food and fresh water supplies; and that as climate impacts worsen, scaling up investments will be essential for our survival. On nearly all accounts, the report makes clear that climate change is impacting the world far faster than scientists had anticipated. Meanwhile countries have failed to rein in planet-warming carbon emissions, which continue to rise.

I'll read the prayer as follows:

We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the provincial government to enact a credible climate action plan and allocate appropriate funding to ensure real reductions in Saskatchewan's greenhouse gas emissions that are consistent with the scientific consensus to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

This petition is signed by the residents of Regina. I do so present.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise this afternoon to present a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to fix the crisis in our children's classrooms. Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition wish to draw our attention to a number of points: that the Sask Party government's cuts mean falling per-student funding and fewer supports for students as they recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; that after years of underfunding, school divisions have nowhere left to cut that will not impact student learning — Mr. Speaker, this is something that we're hearing from boards right across the province as they attempt to submit their budget documents for the current year; and that the Sask Party government's cuts leave educators and support staff without the resources they need to support a pandemic recovery.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about pointing fingers at school boards and it should not be, Mr. Speaker. This is solely on the Sask Party government and that minister.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the Sask Party government to immediately fix the crisis in our classrooms by providing stable and adequate funding for public education in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed the petition today reside in Saskatoon. 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 stop the closures at Wilkie and District Health Centre. These citizens wish to bring to our attention that the Saskatchewan Health Authority is unable to provide reliable and consistent health care services in Wilkie. The health centre emergency department has regularly been closed for years. Several rural communities rely on Wilkie and District Health Centre for health services, and the hospital is a key component to the economic vitality of the region.

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 stop closing emergency department and out-patient services at Wilkie and District Health Centre.

This is signed by individuals from Wilkie, Sedley, and Regina today, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise to present the following petition. The folks who signed this petition wish to bring to your attention the following: that we in this province we have only 10 per cent of Crown land left, and this government has been auctioning off Crown land and leases to the highest bidder; and Mr. Speaker, this government hasn't been meaningfully consulted with impacted communities; and this government must immediately stop the selling-off of Crown land and leases and fix their broken duty-to-consult process.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately stop the sell-off of Crown lands, and work with First Nation and Métis communities to develop a new duty-to-consult process.

The folks who signed this petition reside in Piapot, Okanese, and Sakimay. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Veteran Service Club Support Program

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Canadian flag holds honour and respect in this world, much due to the bravery and sacrifice of our veterans. Canadian soldiers counted the cost and made their stand when peace and freedom were at risk on the world stage. And watching the Ukrainian people fight for their nation gives me a renewed image of the courage my grandparents and their generation had the day they signed up to fight for what they believed and the people that they loved.

Today our veteran service clubs stand as a physical reminder of past Canadians deserving of our honour and respect for the many freedoms that we enjoy and too often take for granted. The Legion halls across this province have been so much more than just a building for the veterans, but have been important meeting places for our communities throughout the years. They've been a place for us to celebrate and for us to mourn, to remember the past and to plan for our future.

Introduced in 2019, the Saskatchewan veteran service club support program provides grants for improvement projects, facility repairs and upgrades, operations, special events, programs, and activities. So, Mr. Speaker, it's fitting that this year's provincial budget increases that commitment by \$1.5 million for strengthening the long-term sustainability of these important institutions.

Mr. Speaker, we want to thank our veterans and thank our veteran service clubs for their tireless work and their service on behalf of our communities. They earned much of the honour that Canada has among nations, and we want to honour them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Walk across Canada for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2S+ Individuals

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I rise to recognize and give thanks to a group of women I was fortunate to meet and join this past Friday as they made their way into Saskatoon: Lindsey Bishop, Krista Fox, and Diane Morin. They are walking across Canada to bring awareness to missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ [two-spirit plus] individuals.

This walk started on February 18th from kilometre zero to the TransCanada Highway in Victoria, BC [British Columbia] and will end in St. John's, Newfoundland. Lindsey Bishop is the sister of Megan Gallagher, who went missing in 2020. Krista Fox is a proud grandmother and a friend of missing Ashley Morin. Diane Morin is Ashley Morin's mom. Ever since Ashley Morin went missing, Krista has been walking from North Battleford to Saskatoon.

On Friday Krista read the names of over 130 individuals that have been reported missing. Mr. Speaker, according to a 2015

RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] report, more than 1,100 Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ plus individuals are missing or have been murdered. That could be as high as 4,000.

I ask all members to join me in thanking Krista Fox, Lindsey Bishop, and Diane Morin for taking this huge responsibility and encourage them to never stop speaking truth in creating awareness and protecting our communities. miigwech, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ramadan Observances in Saskatchewan

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The beginning of spring in Saskatchewan is also the beginning of Ramadan, a month of prayer, fasting, reflection, and community for the Muslim faith. This year Ramadan lasts from April 3rd to April 30th. The common practice is to fast from dawn to sunset. Muslim people are also encouraged to devote their time to acts of charity.

Mr. Speaker, this year's Ramadan also marks the first time in two years that many Muslim families and cultural organizations were able to hold in-person celebrations. For two years now, the normal has been finding ways to worship safely, connect remotely with issues that all faiths in Canada have struggled with. Many groups have found ways to continue safely enjoying religious events like Ramadan, online prayer sessions, or dropping off food items for family and friends.

I was proud to join my colleagues from Saskatoon Westview and Regina Pasqua, who drove up from Regina, to join in prayers and celebration. I will say when the time of dusk arrived, we shortly after enjoyed a great feast. I encourage all those in Saskatchewan to continue to think charitably during this time. I would like to thank Rashid and Mubarak for the open invitation to all Saskatchewan people to join with them at any time. I would like all members to join me in thanking the Muslim communities across our province for all the good community work they do. Thank you.

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

Recent Job Numbers and Government Direction

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, 4,500 jobs were lost in Saskatchewan last month. As a percentage, that's the worst record in the country. In fact last month across Canada, the number of jobs went up. In Saskatchewan the number of jobs went down. Across Canada the number of full-time jobs went up, but in Saskatchewan the number of full-time jobs went down. You may sense a pattern here, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan the unemployment rate went up, but across Canada it went down.

Mr. Speaker, while the Premier is out bragging about whatever statistics he can parse, we are talking about real people, Saskatchewan people who are fighting every day to pay the bills. Last month they had to do that while watching thousands of jobs disappear from February to March. And that was before, Mr. Speaker, they were hit with the Sask Party's 32 fee and tax hikes

that will make life even harder.

Instead of a government that holds us back, Saskatchewan people need a government that actually helps create jobs and grows the economy. Instead of feeding division and pitting Saskatchewan people against each other, we need a government that brings people together to find solutions. This Sask Party government doesn't believe that we're stronger together. Well the good news is, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people over here who do. Thank you.

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

2020 and 2021 Agricultural Hall of Fame Inductees

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past Saturday at Prairieland Park in Saskatoon, I had the opportunity to celebrate and thank the newest inductees into the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame. Mr. Speaker, after both the 2020 and 2021 induction ceremonies were postponed, it was wonderful to gather in person and celebrate some incredible leaders. The inductees that were honoured, Mr. Speaker, have made a mark in areas that include primary production, agribusiness, agricultural research, community development, and politics.

The 2020 inductees are Adele Buettner, John Feige, Jack Hay, Eileen and William Lamont, Gerry Ritz, and Ted Serhienko. The 2021 inductees are Grant Devine, Rick Holm, Bill Jameson, and Bob Tyler.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture is the backbone of our economy and the heart of many of our communities. The industry is full of individuals who excel in their careers while dedicating their time and expertise on boards and within community and industry groups. And without people taking notice and taking the time to nominate them, we wouldn't be able to acknowledge their incredible contributions.

[13:45]

I now ask all members to join me in thanking the 2020 and 2021 inductees for their inspirational commitment and passion for Saskatchewan agriculture. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Celebrate Success Business Awards in Yorkton

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, I was honoured to bring greetings on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan and SaskTel at the Yorkton Chamber Celebrate Success Business Awards dinner. Mr. Speaker, I also presented the Community Merit award on behalf of SaskTel, which is proud to be Saskatchewan's local communications provider and proudly supports Saskatchewan businesses across our province. The finalists for the awards have shown outstanding commitment to developing in Yorkton.

Mr. Speaker, the winners of this year's Community Merit award were the Yorkton Exhibition Association, the Yorkton Lions Club, and the Yorkton Nursery School Co-operative. Winners in

other categories included Mr. Mikes casual steakhouse for Marketing and Community Involvement, Triple A Directional Drilling for Safety, Yorkton Animal Health Centre for Property Restoration, Grain Millers Canada for Business Growth and Expansion, Yorkton Dental for New Business Venture, Hearn's Westview Pharmacy for Customer Service, Credence Construction for People's Choice Award, and The Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy for Small Business of the Year.

Individuals were also recognized, Mr. Speaker. Kenn Propp was recognized as Business Leader of the Year and Nicole Campbell was awarded Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

Well done and congratulations to all those finalists for the hard work that they do, and congratulations to the winners. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the finalists and the winners and the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce for another successful event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Recent Public Offering Shows Oil and Gas Sector Resurgence

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The April 2022 public offering of Crown petroleum and natural gas rights has generated \$19.3 million in revenue for the province. Mr. Speaker, this is more than 10 times the revenue generated by the April 2021 offering. This was the first offering of this fiscal year and is already more than the total oil and gas rights sales for the entire 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, 169 parcels received acceptable bids. The average bonus bid was \$816 per hectare with the highest acceptable bid at \$24,318 per hectare. The Estevan area showed the highest interest, bringing in over \$17 million for 142 parcels. Seventeen of those alone received total bonus bids of \$12.2 million. Mr. Speaker, this is great news for producers in our province.

Mr. Speaker, our government is dedicated to growing the oil and gas sector. It accounts for over 15 per cent of our GDP [gross domestic product] and supports more than 30,000 jobs in Saskatchewan. And we expect to see oil production reach 90 per cent of pre-pandemic levels by the end of this year. Mr. Speaker, the sector is roaring back as global demand increases and countries look to an ethical and reliable supplier of their energy products. They should look no further than Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Leadership Changes at Saskatchewan Health Authority

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, leadership is key to good governance. Over the winter and spring, there have been alarming rates of turnover among senior leaders particularly in health. Now the media has covered government interference that led to the departure of the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] CEO [chief executive officer] at the height of the pandemic already.

But to the Premier: what's the real reason Scott Livingstone left his role as CEO in the middle of a pandemic?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This was just brought up in committee by the interim Leader of the Opposition last week. We certainly discussed this, Mr. Speaker, and wish Mr. Livingstone the best of his opportunities in the future.

We have had retirements. That's what happens when people get into senior positions. This is the tail end of their career. They make their mark in the communities. And we thank Mr. Livingstone for being able to bring all of our health regions together under one umbrella, the SHA. We have turnover at our board. This is natural within an organization.

We appreciate the work that people are doing, Mr. Speaker, but we continue to thank the health care workers that are out there that are doing things on the front line. We have good interim leadership. We have strong leadership led by Arlene Wiks as our board Chair, and will continue to deliver the service that the people of Saskatchewan expect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. There's nothing about this exodus of SHA leadership that's natural. And it's sometimes it's not what's said, Mr. Speaker, but what's not said. And it's the public interest, especially during a health crisis, for the government and the public to know what's going on at the top. Now to the minister: does a non-disclosure agreement exist which prevents the government from discussing details regarding Mr. Livingstone's departure?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As with all the senior leadership at the SHA, this is done through the HR [human resources] process of the board. This is not something that comes out of my office, the minister's office. There is a board for the SHA. This was done when the SHA was formed. We had regional boards. Now we have one board — which we have good diversity on that board — that makes the decisions, not only on the policy decisions but the HR decisions. They'll continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very content with the leadership at the board level. We just met a couple of weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, to go over everything that was happening at the board level, the direction of the government, and the direction of the SHA. We're very confident that will again continue to serve the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — This is a very clear, straightforward question that that minister and the government will know the answer to. So I'm going to ask it one more time. Does a non-disclosure agreement exist which prevents the government from discussing details regarding Mr. Livingstone's departure?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I think I was pretty clear on the process. That direction does not come from my office or the Minister of Rural and Remote Health's office. This is done by the board. That's why we have a very capable board. I know the members might not like the board, but we certainly have confidence in the board, that they're able to carry out the duties that are set forth by the board and the policy direction of the government, Mr. Speaker. We have worked with the board. We will continue to work with the board to be able to make sure that they can provide the people of Saskatchewan with the great service that we are.

Mr. Speaker, we always have turnover within any organization within the government, as well as in the private sector. This is something that does happen, people that retire, people that move on to other positions. We wish them the best of luck, and we thank them for their service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, lots of words but no answer. I did not ask about who made the direction to sign an NDA [non-disclosure agreement]. I just asked about its existence. Yes or no, does an NDA exist which prevents the government from disclosing details of Mr. Livingstone's departure?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Deputy Leader can continue to ask these questions and I'll provide a very similar answer. This is direction of the HR aspect of what happens at the senior level of the SHA . . . is directed under the board. That's why we have a board made up of very diverse community members that provide the direction not just on the policy but on the senior management, Mr. Speaker.

They hired Mr. Andrew Will on the interim, and he's doing an amazing job. He's put a senior leadership in team. He has been able to meet the needs . . . not just also of what happened in the Delta wave but in the Omicron wave. Our health care system is getting back on track. We're making sure that we have the investments to be able to help provide again the services that the people of Saskatchewan expect and need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Again this isn't about who made the direction. This is about whether or not it exists. It's a very simple yes or no question that the government will know the answer to because they'll know whether or not they're subject to an NDA. Mr. Speaker, does an NDA exist which prevents the government from discussing details about Mr. Livingstone's departure?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, again I can't emphasize this enough. The contract is between the board and the SHA executive. That's how it works. It does not come out of my office,

Mr. Speaker. If there is . . . The contract that they hired with Mr. Andrew Will, that they had with Mr. Livingstone, is all directed from the board and the human resource committee on the board.

There's sighs from over there, Mr. Speaker. This is how government works. I know they don't understand that because none of them have actually been in government, Mr. Speaker. But this is how it works. We have a board that runs the executive. The executive provides direction to the management. The management provides direction to the front-line services. This is how an organization is run. Probably because none of them have ever run one in their lifetime. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, you get a lot of condescension and arrogance from that minister, but you sure don't get any answers. Scott Livingstone, Janet Tootosis, Kevin Wasko, and now Paul Babyn from this SHA leadership, all leaving. The minister also confirmed in estimates last week that the Sask Cancer Agency CEO is departing from his role, adding to a growing list of leaders leaving.

Mr. Speaker, which of those leaders are also subject to an NDA?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — [Inaudible] . . . people that have served a lifetime within the health regions, Mr. Speaker, and now with, under the SHA or the Cancer Agency. They're allowed to retire. We thank them for their service, but they are allowed to move on to other opportunities, whether that is retirement, whether they're moving on to other opportunities in different regions. We wish them the best of luck, Mr. Speaker.

But we also have a very active recruitment plan to be able to make sure that we're backfilling that, Mr. Speaker. That was announced in the budget. To be able to bring the people into Saskatchewan, the expertise at all levels, we have a four-point plan of recruitment, retention, and retaining the individuals across the province and around the world, to make sure that we are backfilling for any vacancies that are out there. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, according to this government they're allowed to move on, but they sure as heck better not talk about why they're moving. In a forthcoming moment, the Health minister mentioned on Wednesday that some people have moved on and have been critical of the system. No wonder, Mr. Speaker.

So once again, what former executives are bound by confidentiality agreements that prevent them from discussing their severance and criticisms of this government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition saying that we should discuss HR health policies and why people are leaving, whether they're

retiring and that, on the legislative floor? This is something that should be decide. We should disregard the SHA senior management, disregard the board completely, and we should have that debate here on the floor, Mr. Speaker.

Again I am saying that this is the policy that we do have, Mr. Speaker, to be able to bring people in at senior levels. People move on. Board turnover is healthy. This happens in a lot of organizations. We've seen a lot of turnover over there as far as the leaders over there. It seems every couple of years they're bringing a new one in.

You would think that they would understand this, Mr. Speaker, but what we have is we have a very qualified leader at the helm. Arlene Wiks is the Chair of our board. I am very confident in her abilities and all of the board members' abilities to deliver the policies that are enacted by the SHA board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Provision of Emergency Shelter

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity to ask questions of the minister opposite in estimates last week about the growing housing crisis in this province. And for her insistence that no one goes without a home in this province, because her ministry simply puts them up in a hotel, I was absolutely shocked to learn that the Ministry of Social Services has no idea how many hotels it's paid for, or what it costs the Saskatchewan people. Not even a ballpark figure, Mr. Speaker. Tell me this was a mistake and that the minister has some idea of how much we're spending putting people up in hotels.

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member opposite for the question. I think we had a really good dialogue that night. And as we were talking through the questions and we were talking with officials, what the official said to her was that how the housing and how the dollars flow, they flow through each individual client. So if a client happens to be put up in a hotel, then those dollars get logged to that client's person, not necessarily to a hotel line.

So that's how they log those services, and it would be whether they have an income assistance cheque or special benefits or if they happen to be put up in a hotel for the evening. It goes with the individual client, and so we weren't able to break it out. It's not something that we do. Not saying that it's not something that we can look at moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. That minister is responsible for her ministry, and it is absolutely unfathomable that the minister, that this government has no idea how much they're spending on hotels. It is a reactive and expensive approach to a growing housing crisis. This government has no plan to proactively address the housing crisis, but it has a blank cheque to put people up in hotels? What a backwards approach,

Mr. Speaker.

Again to the minister: how many hotels did her ministry pay for last year, for all of those reasons she listed, and how much did it cost the people of Saskatchewan?

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

[14:00]

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is fully aware, as we spent our time in estimates last week for four hours, and she had the opportunity to ask myself and my officials questions specifically around this issue, and the answer was given: that the money follows the client. And I've already talked about it in the House in my previous answer, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if anybody presents themselves to Social Services in need of assistance, we strive to find them a place to stay. But more importantly, we work with that client on a one-on-one basis as an individual to try and find where we can place them moving forward. Try and get them on assistance if they're not on it. Try to get them the programs that they need with the great community-based organizations that we work with right across this entire province, not just within the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed there were four hours of questions and not a lot of answers, which is why we're bringing the question here. People are living on the streets. Houses are burning down because people are trying to stay warm in them. Affordable housing units are being built elsewhere because this government is not a partner at the table. We have hundreds of vacant units across the province and no plan to fill them while people struggle to find housing, Mr. Speaker. Housing is a human right, yet this government is intent on sticking with its do-nothing approach that leaves people on the street. It's costing lives, and it's wasting public money. Why not create a plan that works?

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Homelessness is a complex issue. The root causes are often intertwined with individuals who may be experiencing disabilities, mental health, addictions, interpersonal, or even intergenerational trauma, Mr. Speaker. There are several reasons why a person may be homeless.

But what I do know, Mr. Speaker, is that when they present themselves to us, we try to get them the help that they need. We work collaboratively with them and try to find them housing, try to find them services. That's the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Services, and it's working with that client. And then that client makes the decisions that they need to make, Mr. Speaker. And we will continue to work with them moving forward.

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

Carbon Emissions and International Investment

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, on Friday the Premier told the Prince Albert Chamber of Commerce that when it comes to questions about Saskatchewan's highest per capita emissions, he said, "I don't care." Is this the message this government has been sending as it visits countries overseas to try to attract international investment? Is the Government of Saskatchewan's position on emissions that, in the Premier's words, they don't care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to provide a little context in the quote that they would like to maybe continue to quote here. Let me read that into the record for everyone involved. A lot of folks will . . . And this is a quote by the Premier, Mr. Speaker:

A lot of folks will come to me and say, "hey, you guys have the highest carbon emissions per capita." I don't care. We have the highest exports per capita in Canada as well. We make the cleanest products, and then we send it to over 150 countries around the world. This province is most certainly a part of the solution when it comes to a cleaner, greener economy. We're part of the solution to your energy security issues. We're part of the solution when it comes to your food security issues.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, the contact doesn't change the facts. Not only is this a wildly irresponsible message to be sending when we know collectively we need to do more, this government should absolutely care. Our warming climate is already creating havoc in Saskatchewan. Our northern forests burn while crops across the province bake.

Just last week an extreme spring storm destroyed power infrastructure, leaving hundreds without power for days, some without power to this day. Meanwhile the province is flying blind without a real plan. Will this government show it does indeed care about our emissions and create a real plan to address them?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Spring storms are spring storms. We would certainly like to thank the members of SaskPower for the extraordinary work that they do.

Mr. Speaker, counting emissions per capita skews the numbers in a way that really does not tell the full story. Saskatchewan produces the food, the fertilizer, and the fuel that the world needs, and we should not be penalized for that. A more appropriate measure is emissions intensity, and this measure clearly shows that Saskatchewan's economic growth far outpaces Saskatchewan's emissions growth.

Mr. Speaker, during our time in government here, Saskatchewan's GDP went up by 19 per cent while our emissions intensity fell by 8 per cent. This is great work: \$14 billion in new capital announcements. Our emissions intensity is going to

continue to decrease, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, the IPCC report released last week couldn't be more clear. Climate change is already taking a toll on humanity at a grave cost. This requires a serious approach from a serious government.

For a province that is positioned to be a world leader in emissions-reducing technologies, what message does it send to domestic and international investors when our political leaders are more interested in delivering a cheap political applause rather than tackling these challenges head-on? How does a message of "we don't care" attract the kind of investment into this province to create future jobs for the next generation of Saskatchewan workers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, I think the international investment community has spoken — \$14 billion — and more to come, more to come. You know what, Mr. Speaker? We really do agree that we need to reduce emissions so that our children can enjoy the same quality of life that we do today. What we do not agree with is how the agenda is being pushed. And you know what? Cherry-picking statistics to misrepresent Saskatchewan does not help anyone, Mr. Speaker.

We need to grow our economy, to continue to create jobs and revenues that are going to support the public services that Saskatchewan people rely on, Mr. Speaker. Innovation, problem solving, are the two great attributes that our Saskatchewan-based sectors are going to have and develop into the future, Mr. Speaker. And this is what's going to reduce emissions in Saskatchewan, not federal mandates.

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

Funding for Education

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, in committee last week we learned that the \$2.5 million increase in funding for independent schools is reflective of an increase in enrolment. Enrolment is apparently up in these schools, and with an increase of nearly 300 students. Let's review. That's \$2.5 million in additional funding for 300 new kids. But in comparison, Mr. Speaker, the 27 school divisions in the public system are seeing an increase of 1.1 million with 1,300 more kids and mounting costs that are beyond their control. Can the minister explain how this makes any sense at all for public education?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, here's the reality: \$2.88 billion in funding from the Ministry of Education to support public education in this province, almost \$2 billion just in school operating funding, an increase of one and a half per cent, Mr. Speaker.

In the years that we've had the privilege of forming government,

since 2007, enrolment's up 10 per cent. Now that's not something that they needed to worry about when they were in government, Mr. Speaker, with the population in our schools going down. Over that same period of time, a 41 per cent increase in funding far outpacing the commitments with respect to the enrolment increases.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to continuing to fund public education, to supporting our kids in the classroom, and that's exactly what the people of Saskatchewan can expect.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, I'll note that that minister's answers said not a word about funding for independent schools. And I appreciate, you know, he's kind of taking one for the team over there, but let's be real. What we're talking about here are cuts to education, students losing their supports, ballooning class sizes, kids with intensive needs not getting the support that they need at school.

Okay, now the Education minister doesn't get it, and that was apparent at the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] spring assembly, where the minister was asked about increased funding for private schools. His response, Mr. Speaker: that families are choosing private education over our public system and that those in the room need to ask why students are leaving. Mr. Speaker, he put the blame, he pointed the finger at our school divisions and leaders.

Does this government regret offending the leaders in the room with blame and division? And is it the government position that our public school system is failing our students and driving them away?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, what this government's committed to is parents' choice with respect to public education. Mr. Speaker, if a parent wants to send their children to the public system, to the Catholic system, to a qualified independent school, that's their choice and this government has made the commitment to be able to support the choice of parents where it comes to the education of their children, Mr. Speaker.

There's been an increase in funding across the piece, Mr. Speaker, not just with respect to public education but with respect to qualified independent schools. And the member knows that those are funded completely differently than the way they're funded through the grant in the public school system. He knows that, Mr. Speaker. But this government's going to continue to support the choice of parents when it comes to how they want their children educated, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan can count on that.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Suicide Prevention Strategy

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, this is the seventh day this spring I rise on behalf of Saskatchewan families, today the Ratt-Roberts family, who have lost a loved one to suicide. When will we see a

real plan to save Saskatchewan lives, a real plan?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I extend my sympathies to the Ratt-Roberts family on the loss that they have suffered. And I extend that sympathy to any family in this province that's experienced a suicide in their family.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will know that in May of 2020, we released the Pillars for Life suicide prevention strategy, which incorporates a number of different initiatives across this province.

Mr. Speaker, I can say since 2018, we have invested over \$92 million into a variety of mental health and addictions initiatives across this province, in southern Saskatchewan, in northern communities as well. We know we have additional work to do in this area, and that's why we continue to collaborate with community members across this province to address this very serious issue in Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, we have a crisis going on in our province with mental health, addictions, and suicide. We have an opportunity. The child's advocate report came out very clear. Front-line workers are saying it very clear. Families are asking very clear. They don't want to see anyone else suffer what they have gone, the loss they have gone through.

And they don't want to see any other family . . . They tell me that. And they're tired of hearing the government say, you know, our condolences are with you. They want some action. They know you're sincere when you say you're sorry, but they want some action. We have a crisis. Please respond to the people of our good province.

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do, all of us in this Assembly, take this issue very seriously. I know that meetings continue to happen between provincial government representatives in our ministry with the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]. They've been happening over a past number of months and they continue to happen as we speak, Mr. Speaker, to discuss initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I took the opportunity earlier this year, January, to travel to La Ronge and Sucker River to meet with community leaders in those communities to hear first-hand and see first-hand some of the concerns that they are raising, Mr. Speaker. And I also had the opportunity to sit down with the member opposite and have a discussion with him one on one.

And I invite the member opposite to provide any sort of additional ideas that he may have in this regard, as I've said to any community member across this province as we try to address this as a province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 82 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2022*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 82, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2022* be now introduced and read a first time.

[14:15]

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 82 be now introduced and read a 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: — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 83 — *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2022*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 83, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2022* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 83 be now introduced and read a 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: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 84 — *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2022*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 84, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2022* be now

introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 84 be now introduced and read a 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: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 81 — *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act*

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading at the conclusion of these remarks of *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act*.

Mr. Speaker, our economy is growing. Saskatchewan is attracting new business investment and our current businesses are expanding. With that growth comes an increased demand for people to fill the new jobs that are being created. Labour shortages are impacting businesses across North America and will be one of the top economic challenges going forward. Saskatchewan will be in competition for workers both domestically and internationally. *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act* will support the attraction of skilled workers to our province. The Act will reduce barriers to building a stronger Saskatchewan and continue growing our economy. We need more people from out of the province to come and work and live here in Saskatchewan and assist the efforts of employers to recruit domestically and internationally to fill job vacancies in communities across the province.

Saskatchewan is one of the only provinces in the country without legislation requiring regulatory bodies to comply with domestic trade agreements or to support fair registration practices for internationally trained workers. This does put us at a disadvantage in addressing critical labour shortages across a number of key sectors such as health care, construction, and IT [information technology]. Reducing barriers to working in Saskatchewan will help employers recruit both domestically and internationally to fill job vacancies in this province.

Like all governments across Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan has delegated the regulation of occupational licensing to independent bodies whose focus is to set standards for practice that ensure public protection. This Act still recognizes the independence of regulatory bodies but prescribes that Canadian certified workers and internationally trained workers with proven competence should receive licensure in a transparent, objective, timely, impartial, and procedurally fair manner.

The Government of Saskatchewan is party to two internal trade agreements to support labour mobility: the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement. These agreements are meant to ensure that any skilled worker that is licensed to work in a regulated occupation in one province or territory within Canada should be eligible for a licensure in any other province or territory. This Act will ensure that Saskatchewan's regulatory bodies are providing labour mobility as it was intended under our internal trade agreement.

Mr. Speaker, this Act also goes further when it comes to labour mobility and fair registration practices. In fact this Act will be the most comprehensive of its kind within Canada. This Act will apply to more occupations than anywhere else in Canada, and it will cover registration practices for both Canadian and internationally trained applicants. Professionals and skilled tradespeople within Canada will benefit from streamlined and simpler application requirements. The Government of Saskatchewan will be able to ensure that workers receive licensure in a timely manner through setting maximum timelines for a licensure decision.

This Act will also limit the additional training, work experience, and assessments that can be imposed on internationally trained workers that have proven their competence. If a regulatory body is not providing fair registration for Canadian and internationally trained applicants, this Act will give the government the ability to compel them through a compliance order, including financial penalties. Ensuring timely and fair foreign qualification recognition processes will support our province's ability to attract skilled labour and hard-to-recruit workers that our province so badly needs.

This includes recruitment efforts that Saskatchewan will undertake internationally, including the recruitment of nurses and other health care workers from the Philippines. Mr. Speaker, skilled newcomers will greatly benefit from the ability to work in their intended occupation in a timely manner. We have all heard stories of highly educated immigrants working in jobs below their skill level because of licensing delays and barriers to entry. This Act will allow us to take concrete steps to address that issue.

Saskatchewan has attracted approximately 13,000 newcomers per year over the past five years, two of which were in a global pandemic where borders were closed and international travel was challenging. Saskatchewan is already an attractive destination for newcomers, but this Act will allow us to go further and become the top destination for skilled workers in Canada.

Through this Act, a labour mobility and fair registration practices office will be established within the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training. This newly established office will administer

the Act and assist regulatory bodies in meeting their obligations. This will include working with the regulatory bodies to examine time frames for registration decisions, registration application requirements, qualification assessment processes, and internationally trained recognition pathways.

We estimate that Saskatchewan has approximately 120 regulated occupations and 60 regulatory bodies. This Act will apply to all of Saskatchewan's regulated occupations. This means that whether you are a plumber or a pharmacist looking to come to work in Saskatchewan, you will benefit from transparent, objective, timely, impartial, and procedurally fair registration practices.

This Act will increase employers' pool of labour beyond our borders to ensure that they can fill job vacancies and continue to grow our economy. Addressing the challenge of labour shortages involves multiple strategies. The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to develop its current supply of labour through investments and programs such as workforce development and skills training. As an example, budget '22-23 included 4.9 million to expand nurse training seats within the province by 150.

To meet the demands of a growing economy, we not only need to develop our current labour force, but we also need to recruit domestically and internationally. This Act will remove barriers to recruitment and create a consistent approach to recognizing out-of-province credentials.

This Act will support the competitiveness of Saskatchewan by ensuring the province is the leading jurisdiction in Canada for simplifying the process for skilled workers to become licensed and to enter the labour force. Furthermore, this will support the growth plan goals of growing the provincial population to 1.4 million and adding 100,000 jobs by 2030.

It will also support the growth plan actions to address credential recognition issues for new Canadians, increase interprovincial credential recognition, and ensure employers have better access to a qualified labour force. To build a stronger Saskatchewan and continue growing our economy, we need more people from out-of-province to come and work and live here.

If we do not enact this Act, Saskatchewan will be limited in its ability to ensure workers and employers benefit from fair, simple, and timely registration practices, leaving us an outlier in Canada. This could impact the province's ability to attract and retain skilled workers from across the country and internationally. Workers may seek to live and work elsewhere, in other cities and provinces where there are already simpler pathways to professional licensure, such as Alberta, a province that recently introduced similar, although not as comprehensive, legislation.

Saskatchewan is in competition with other provinces and the rest of the world to attract skilled workers to fill available jobs here. If we can't bring in skilled people, our standard of living and our provincial economic growth will suffer in the long term.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 81 be now read

a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise this afternoon to enter into the debate on Bill No. 81, Mr. Speaker, *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act*.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this bill is seeking to address some challenges that we've been hearing from stakeholders and individuals wanting to come to Saskatchewan to live and to work for several years now. And obviously the intricacies of this bill will need to be looked through with a fine-tooth comb by the critic, and likely also the critic for Labour and the critic for Justice as well, because there are a lot of important pieces to this puzzle, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of different implications that could result from this.

As this minister said, this government needs to recruit and retain more individuals to come work in Saskatchewan. We've seen a growing amount of out-migration in this province. And perhaps Saskatchewan was a premier destination for recruiting skilled workers and workers of all different types of professions, Mr. Speaker, but that's not the case anymore.

And that's becoming more apparent when we see, for example, Sask Hospital not being able to open to its full capacity because of the shortage of over 100 registered psychiatric nurses, Mr. Speaker. And I think that shows to a trend of when you have a government that, for example, cancelled children's surgeries for a time being, Mr. Speaker, and that's the story that was out in the news. Or a government that seems to chronically underfund publicly funded education systems, Mr. Speaker.

It becomes more and more difficult for businesses and professional bodies to attract workers to this province, Mr. Speaker. And this government needs to understand and be clear about how the decisions that they make in all of the ministries affect the ability to grow the workforce in Saskatchewan and grow the economy, Mr. Speaker, which is why these pieces are all so important, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, the critic will be looking through this piece of legislation with a fine-tooth comb. I know this is something that she's asked about with the minister at committee in the past, Mr. Speaker. We'll be looking at it very carefully to make that it's done right in a way that will benefit growing the skilled workforce in Saskatchewan while at the same time respecting the independence of regulatory bodies, Mr. Speaker.

And in order to facilitate that work, I'm prepared now to adjourn debate on Bill No. 81.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 70

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 70 — *The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 2021/Loi modificative de 2021 sur l'Assemblée législative*** be now read a second time, and the proposed amendment moved by Ms. Sarauer.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't say it's a pleasure to be weighing back in on this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, Bill 70, because we shouldn't be debating this piece of legislation any further. It should have been pulled from the order paper, Mr. Speaker, had that government understood what it represents to this Chamber, to this Assembly, to our democracy, and to Saskatchewan people.

You know, any government worth their salt, Mr. Speaker, would have realized how wrong-headed ramming forward these historic and unprecedented changes are, Mr. Speaker. And they would've vacated the field, pulled this bill, and focused on priorities that are important to Saskatchewan people.

Yet here we are, Mr. Speaker. Here we are getting later into the spring session with a government that continues to ram forward with its Bill 70, Mr. Speaker, a bill that represents wild political overreach and politicization of this Chamber, this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, of the role of the Sergeant-at-Arms and the security that we trust in, Mr. Speaker, that security that we trust in to uphold democracy here in the people's building, Mr. Speaker, here in the legislative precinct, Mr. Speaker.

Yet we have a government though that, you know, wants to spend more time pushing forward this legislation at the expense of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, because there are so many other priorities that we could be advancing on the floor of this Assembly, that we could be resourcing through government, Mr. Speaker. But that's not the style of Sask Party we're dealing with at this stage of their tenure, Mr. Speaker.

What we see in fact with Bill 70 is a government that has an interest in controlling all things, Mr. Speaker, that's arrogant and that's entitled and that, you know, wants to grab power in all the places that it can, Mr. Speaker. And you know, in this Chamber and in this legislature, in our province we've been so well served by our Sergeant-at-Arms and his team and those previous, Mr. Speaker. And we've seen that in recent months and we've seen that historically over the years, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

I think of Sergeant-at-Arms Pat Shaw, who's weighed in saying that he doesn't see what's to be gained on this front, Mr. Speaker, questioning and challenging the override of this government, Mr. Speaker. And he's right on the money, you know, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, what we've seen as well through this debate, Mr. Speaker, is the Deputy Leader of the official opposition and the Justice critic just eviscerate the arguments, the weak and feeble arguments of that Sask Party government and of that minister and of the House Leader who brought this legislation forward, Mr.

Speaker.

And through that time, that member has put straightforward, direct questions to that government, to that minister, to the House Leader, of which she's received no answers. At this stage of the game, you know, we have a government again that can't explain why they're acting on this front, why they've chosen this course as opposed to working in a bipartisan way as we always have in this Assembly on matters of security and matters that relate to the Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Speaker.

But again that's not the style of this current Sask Party government that's grown entitled, Mr. Speaker, in their role and that seem all too interested in advancing their political interests but at the expense of the public's interest, Mr. Speaker. And that's clear with the changes that they're pushing forward here, Mr. Speaker.

Of course what we're talking about is a long and important parliamentary custom, Mr. Speaker, in having the independence of the Speaker, the Sergeant-at-Arms reporting through the Speaker, Mr. Speaker, that level of trust that we all have in that level of independence, Mr. Speaker.

Now this isn't just important to an official opposition, Mr. Speaker. This is important to everyone in this Chamber, and it's important to everyone that interacts with this building. Every last citizen who comes forward to this building that may have a concern or a grievance that needs to be addressed, through to the journalists and the media, Mr. Speaker, who are so critical to democracy, Mr. Speaker, through to everybody that works in this building. And yes, of course all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] as well.

And this is a government that's simply throwing out this parliamentary custom, Mr. Speaker, and that's gutting the role of the Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Speaker, that's advancing political control of this new politicized security force that they want to bring forward, Mr. Speaker.

You know, it's fair to say that these things matter, you know. This is the people's Assembly. It's the place where citizens should come forward. It's a place where rallies and protests should occur. And in a democracy, protest is critical. It's critical a protest is allowed to occur in a peaceful way, Mr. Speaker. And as we look around the world right now, as we look at what's occurring in Ukraine and many other parts of the world, you know, we should be doing all we can to live up to the promise of this province and to uphold those democratic underpinnings of Saskatchewan. Instead we see a government walking those back.

We have questions at times. We have the ministers opposite who have shouted across saying that they have security concerns, Mr. Speaker. And not to dismiss those security concerns, we have ways to resolve those concerns. It's by working with the Sergeant-at-Arms and it's by working together in a bipartisan way, Mr. Speaker, because if we have urgent security concerns, I can assure the public out there that the way they're moving forward this piece of legislation is certainly not any sort of a swift resolution to any sort of concerns. And I want to let the voting public know that the official opposition has always stood ready to work together in a bipartisan way, has never blocked resources for the very important work of that Sergeant-at-Arms and their

team, and that we stand ready to do that work the way that it should be. And through you, Mr. Speaker, reporting to you as the Speaker of this Assembly.

We have members of this Assembly who bring their children back and forth from this legislature. I know the member from Elphinstone had her newborn here today, Mr. Speaker. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, it matters to that member and all of us that we have a safe legislature, Mr. Speaker. And certainly the way we're going about the conversation right now about safety isn't a productive one, Mr. Speaker, and it's not the way you would go about a conversation like this in a democracy, Mr. Speaker.

And that's, I guess, what is so troubling here, is we have a government that, on front after front, wants political control. We see that with their overreach into many other institutions and organizations that give this province strength in other levels of governance. We've seen that with the school boards all across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We've seen that with Wascana Park out these very doors, where this government was unwilling for there to be democratic control of that incredible park and needed to have full political control of it, Mr. Speaker.

We see it recently, of course, in health care and in the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Mr. Speaker, where this government wants to be able to control who's in whatever roles and to have political control over such an important institution to the people of our province.

But again, Mr. Speaker, you know, it's a shame that we're here debating this piece of legislation that's so offside with the interests of this legislature and with Saskatchewan by way of our democracy, Mr. Speaker, instead of focusing our attention on the priorities of Saskatchewan people in a way that's constructive and meaningful and gets them results. But that's on that Sask Party government.

And my call on the government is to finally wake up to the reality of who they serve — the people of this province — to wake up to the reality of how offside this power grab is, this politicization of this incredibly important role, Mr. Speaker, and to withdraw this piece of legislation, to scrap this piece of legislation. And if we have security concerns that need to be addressed, Mr. Speaker, we plead with that government to go about it in a way that's going to bring about results and to work together in the bipartisan way, through you, Mr. Speaker, and with the Sergeant-at-Arms. And we're prepared and ready to do that work, Mr. Speaker.

So I call on that government to, you know, quit wasting the time of this Chamber for their own political gain and own political control, and to focus this Chamber instead on the best interests of Saskatchewan, the best interests of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, and to withdraw this bill.

With all that being said, Mr. Speaker, at this time I'll ask for leave to adjourn Bill 70.

The Speaker: — The member has asked leave to adjourn. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Go ahead with your motion.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — At this time I'd ask to adjourn Bill 70.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 79

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. J. Harrison that **Bill No. 79 — *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into adjourned debate on Bill 79, *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act*, 2022.

This is a new bill, Mr. Speaker, which will serve to create the Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation. The SIIFC will provide 75 million in loan guarantees and is intended to improve access to capital for Indigenous communities, specifically for natural resource development, as well as value-added agriculture.

While this investment in Indigenous-owned companies is supported by the opposition, Mr. Speaker, and is certainly significant in furthering economic reconciliation, we are curious to know why these two sectors in particular — natural resource development and value-added agriculture — are the only sectors contemplated in this Act. Certainly I'm sure we can all agree that reconciliation must take place across all sectors.

The opposition would very much like to know whether the government intends to expand this to other Indigenous-owned companies in the future. Also note, Mr. Speaker, the stated goal of this bill is to support increased Indigenous participation in the economy and to stimulate economic development in Indigenous communities.

We are certainly supportive as the opposition of these goals and are happy to hear that consultations and a round table have taken place with Indigenous leaders. As you know, Mr. Speaker, my colleague the member for Saskatoon Centre and the critic for First Nations and Métis relations has been tireless in her advocacy calling on the government to conduct meaningful, not just superficial, tick-a-box consultations with Indigenous leaders.

So I hope this government has been listening and taking her message to heart, including with this bill. As always, our critic will be consulting widely around this bill, Mr. Speaker, to ensure feedback from all relevant stakeholders has been properly taken into account. And with that I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 79, *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 80

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. J. Harrison that **Bill No. 80 — *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 80, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act* of 2022. There are certainly a lot of questions that we'll have about this piece of legislation. I know that back when I was first elected, I was the critic for Innovation and SOCO [Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation], so I have some awareness of what these relationships have previously existed as. And I think, you know, bringing forward a bill that creates a single innovation agency could make sense. But I think there are a lot of questions around who requested this change, who was consulted, and really what the tech sector has looked like in Saskatchewan in the past several years, Mr. Speaker.

This bill proposes to move SOCO under the authority of Innovation Saskatchewan and to transfer SOCO from CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] oversight to IS [Innovation Saskatchewan] oversight. What we've heard from the minister is that this creates a single point of contact for stakeholders, that it will help grow the tech sector, and that it will streamline services for R & D [research and development]. And I think we all know the importance of research and development.

Being a Saskatoon resident myself, Mr. Speaker, who has spent a lot of time on the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] campus, we know about the important role of Innovation Place and the important role of innovation in driving our economy. I think there is so much more work that can be done on this front to make Saskatchewan a real leader in the tech sector, and I would hope that when we're making changes like this, that is the true goal behind this work.

Certainly we know that the tech sector used to form a very small sliver of the economy, but increasingly this is how we do business. This is what our world is today, so we need to treat it with that level of importance and make sure that we are being careful about what we are doing here, Mr. Speaker.

Very much in support of growing our tech sector, so appreciate the minister's comments on that front. We definitely want to make sure that we're bringing this business to Saskatchewan and creating an environment that will attract business. And we also, at the same time, need to make sure that we are looking after the people of this province, creating an environment that families feel they want to live in, making sure that we have adequate health care, education, all of these public system services that people rely on to call Saskatchewan a good place to live.

So I certainly hope that that continues to be a focus for this government and that everyone will have an opportunity to thrive under this environment. So we'll be watching closely to go through some of the details of this bill, but with that I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 80 for today.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:45.]

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