

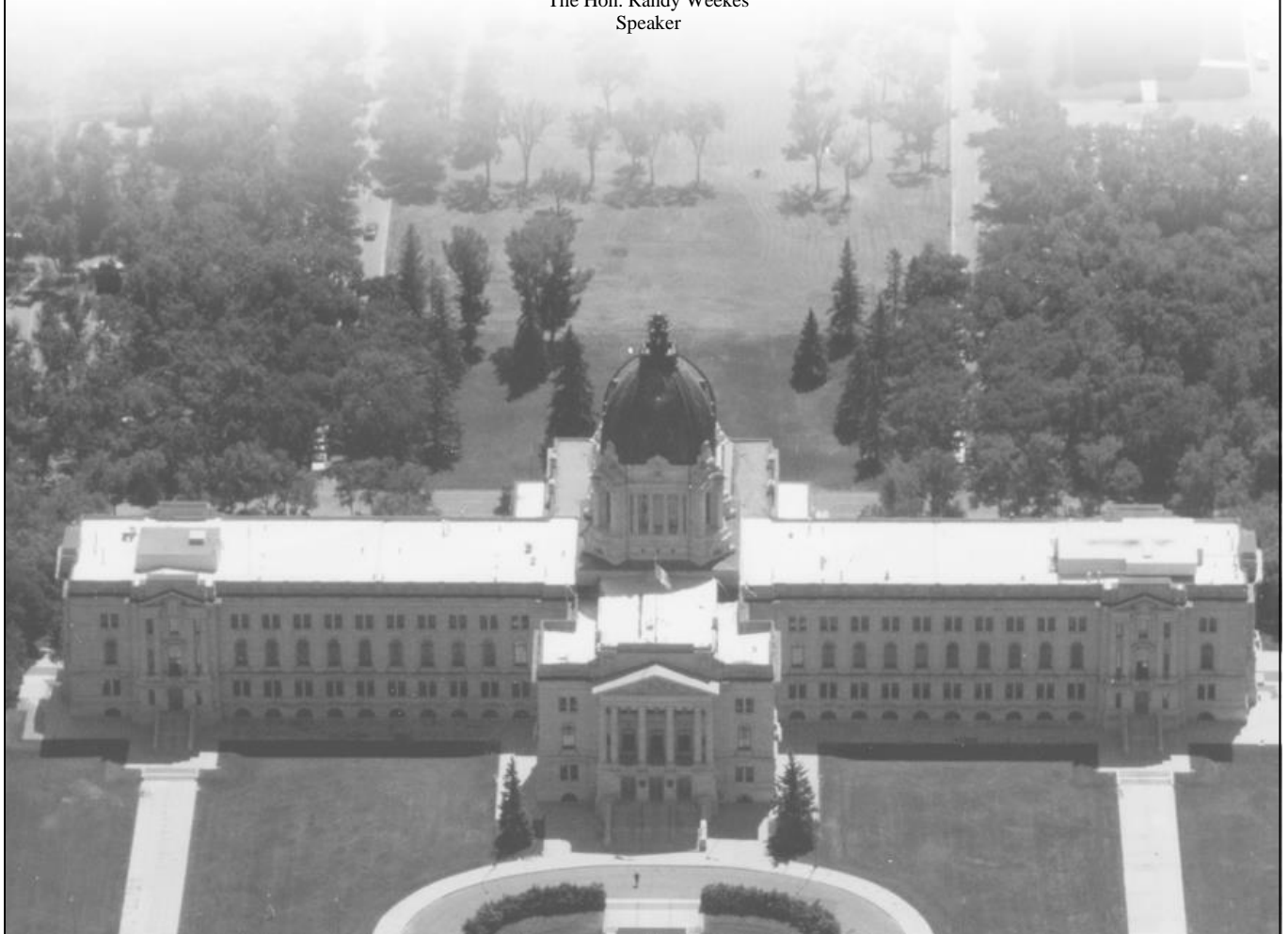
SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, to you, to all members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we are joined today by a number of Olympians, Paralympians as well as their coaches and team support structure, Mr. Speaker. And I want to take this opportunity to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly but also to thank them, thank them for all of the perseverance and the effort that they've shown, thank them for representing our province and our nation at the Olympics, the summer and winter Olympics as well as the summer and winter Paralympics, Mr. Speaker.

We had an event here this morning which the member from Saskatoon Eastview spoke at; the member from Melfort as well emceed that event, Mr. Speaker. I was sitting there and I couldn't help but think of a couple of words that popped into my head. One was "inspire" and one was "aspire," Mr. Speaker. And we're so very grateful to each of these individuals and all of those that are involved in their supporting teams for what they have achieved and how they represented this province and this nation. But also how they inspire our youth in our communities across Saskatchewan and across Canada, and how you inspire our youth to really aspire to be like these people that have joined us here today, to be successful and to put their nose to the grindstone, Mr. Speaker, and to get up and to train for whatever their respective youth athletic area of interest is, Mr. Speaker.

And I would just hope that when each of us, our Olympians and Paralympians included, when you drive through your community and you drive by a swimming pool and you see all of the cars and vehicles in the parking lot, know that you have inspired those youth to be there and to try their hardest in that recreation centre. When you drive by a skating arena, know that there are youth in there that are aspiring to be just like you, whether it be in speed skating, whether it be in figure skating, whether it be in hockey, Mr. Speaker. The ski hills — the few ski hills that we have in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — but know that each and every one of those kids on that ski hill is snowboarding or skiing to be just like you, as the athletes that they look up to and that they aspire ultimately to be just like, Mr. Speaker.

We are so proud of what those youth are aspiring to be, Mr. Speaker. And I would hope that our Olympic and Paralympic athletes, when they drive by those recreation facilities, would just grin a little bit and be proud for a moment of what they have given to so many children across the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of this Assembly to join me in welcoming our Paralympians, our Olympians, and their teams to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to you and through you, I'm honoured to join with the Premier in welcoming our esteemed and honoured guests to their Legislative Assembly. It was an honour to bring remarks on behalf of the official opposition this morning. And I want to just say again how inspiring it is to watch all of our Olympians, our Paralympians, our coaches, our officials, the trainers, all of the effort that goes into representing both Canada and the province of Saskatchewan at the biggest stage for athletics in the world.

Thank you for upholding those Olympic ideals — those ideals of excellence, friendship, and respect. Thank you for being the role models that my kids, our kids, our grandkids look up to and look to for inspiration, as the Premier said.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming our esteemed guests to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you for being here, and congratulations on your achievements.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an absolute privilege to stand here today and introduce and welcome to her legislature, a constituent of mine, Louise Ashcroft. Louise is a classifier and a medical delegate for the World ParaVolley. And she attended, I believe, her second straight Paralympics as a classifier for sitting volleyball, having gone to her first Paralympics as a sitting volleyball classifier at the 2016 games. Again it's just an absolute privilege to get to know her a little bit earlier today and to welcome her today, to this, her legislature.

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

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to introduce you to the coach with the Canadian snowboard team in slopestyle and big air, Adam Burwell. Thank you, Adam. Adam, who is from Regina, attended his third winter Olympics in Beijing with the snowboard team. He is here with his guests, Jennifer Burwell, Brian Burwell, and Barbara March-Burwell. Please warmly welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

While on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce you to para badminton coach Frank Gaudet. Frank made his first Paralympic appearance at the Summer Games in Tokyo coaching the Canadian para badminton team as the sport made its Paralympic debut. He is originally from Bellevue but lives in Regina. Frank has been involved in badminton primarily as a coach for over 40 years.

Frank is joined today by his guests Joy Gaudet, Laurie-Anne Ruecker, and grandkids Jayna Ruecker, Chase Ruecker, and Ainsley Gaudet, Kennedy Gaudet, and Beau Gaudet. Please warmly welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

While I'm on my feet, I would like to . . . Seems like I'm surrounded by many athletes in Regina Pasqua. While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce to you Lisa Hoffart of Regina. Lisa was a part of the Team Canada mission staff outfitting team at the Beijing winter Olympics. She also works alongside athletes as a game plan advisor with the

Canadian Sport Centre Saskatchewan. I ask all the members to please warmly welcome Lisa to her Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an absolute privilege to introduce a shining star in my consistency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre. I am so pleased to introduce the Paralympic wheelchair racer Jessica Frotten, from here in Regina. Jessica made her Paralympic debut at the Summer Games in Tokyo, Mr. Speaker, in wheelchair racing.

She is from Whitehorse originally but now calls Regina her home. How lucky we are, Mr. Speaker. Jessica competed in four events: the T54 class 400-, 800-, and 1500-metre races as well as the universal 4 x 100 metre relay. She has two bronze medals from the 2015 Parapan American Games in Toronto. Jessica is joined by her guests, Ben Lozinsky and Jen Wood. I would ask everyone to join me in welcoming Jessica to this, her Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to introduce Canadian national pistol coach Lisa Borgerson. She attended her second straight summer Olympics in Tokyo as coach with the Canadian shooting team. Originally from Rockglen, she now lives in Fort Qu'Appelle. Lisa was one of three female Saskatchewan coaches to attend the 2020 Olympics. I ask everyone to please give Lisa a warm welcome to her legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased this afternoon to introduce one of Melfort's famous people, Julie Kozun. And my claim to fame is that I'm Julie's good buddy's uncle, but my daughter played on her high school team. You know, Julie is the youngest player on the Paralympic team for sitting volleyball. And they sadly lost the bronze medal game, got fourth. But Julie's looking forward to, in three years, leading the team to the podium, and we're looking forward to that.

You know, Mr. Speaker, nobody's able to get where we get without, you know, the kind of parents that Julie has. And her guests here today, Lynne Hanson and Randy Kozun. So welcome to your legislature, Julie.

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

Mr. Friesen: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was very fortunate this morning to meet the young lady that I'm proud to introduce, Canadian speed skating legend and Canada's chef de mission for the 2022 Beijing winter Olympics and Saskatchewan, Catriona Le May Doan.

Catriona is originally from Saskatoon, now making her home in Calgary. Welcome to your legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce performance lead coach Carla Nicholls. Carla is originally from Broadview but now lives in Regina. She attended her first Paralympic Games in Tokyo as a coach with the Canadian para athletes team, but has previously attended three Olympic Games. Carla is joined by her guests Dawson Nicholls and Arden Nicholls. Please warmly welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce goalball referee Launel Scott from Saskatoon. I had the opportunity to meet with her briefly and learn a little bit about what that sport is all about, and I'm certainly intrigued by it. Launel attended the summer Paralympics in Tokyo as a goalball official. She lives in Saskatoon, and she previously attended the 2012 London Paralympics as an official. Please warmly welcome Launel and her guest Tony Badger to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Meyers: — Mr. Speaker, truly an honour to be surrounded by such a group of people that represented our country so well. And I am pleased to introduce support staff member for para swimmer Marj Walton of Regina. She attended her third straight Paralympic Games in Tokyo with the Canadian para swimming team. Marj lives here in Regina and was an inaugural recipient of the Saskatchewan Sport Awards Inspire Through Sport Award for 2021. And she's currently the executive director for Swim Saskatchewan.

Please warmly welcome Marj and her guests, Mary Brown, Jodi Hachey-Nicholson, Janice Rathgeber, and Jean Rathgeber, to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Goudy: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We had a great time this morning with the 11 athletes who are here in the building, but we had a number of athletes that weren't able to make it to be with us today, and I just wanted to recognize them as well. Lord, they did a great job representing us on the world stage and made us proud. So I'd ask if everybody just withheld the applause to the end, and then we'll do that for the whole team.

The following team members were officials: Alexandra Blair, women's hockey, from Weyburn; Chantal Boudreau, from women's soccer, Regina; Ryan Gaudet, wheelchair rugby, Bellevue; Cianna Lieffers, women's hockey, Saskatoon; Chris Shore, wheelchair rugby, Regina.

[13:45]

The following team member was a classifier: Julie Bakke, wheelchair rugby, Saskatoon.

And the following were support staff: Rhonda Shishkin, physiotherapist, women's basketball, Saskatoon; Graham Olson, video analyst, swimming, Saskatoon; Lynn Seguin, team manager, wheelchair fencing, Saskatoon; Chris Dornan, medical attaché, bobsleigh and skeleton, Saskatoon; Mark Jesney, physiotherapist, speed skating, Saskatoon; Sheila Guenther, para swimming official, Estevan.

And the following were coaches: Mary Carroll, diving, Saskatoon; Lisa Thomaidis, women's basketball, Saskatoon; Eric Kramer, para swimming, Saskatoon; John Wetzstein, para rowing, Regina; Todd McClements, long-track speed skating, Saskatoon; Lyndon Rush, bobsleigh, Humboldt; Ken Babey, para hockey, Saskatoon; Kaspar Wirz, para Nordic skiing, Saskatoon.

And the following were our athletes that weren't able to be here with us today: bronze medallist, outfielder in softball, Jenny Gilbert, Saskatoon; Rylan Wiens, diving, 10-metre platform, Pike Lake; Kenzie Priddell, artistic swimming, Regina; Tammara Thibeault, boxing, Regina; Anicka Newell, athletics, Saskatoon; Cole Pratt, swimming, Regina; Kelsey Wog, swimming, Regina; bronze medallist in para cycling, Keely Shaw from Midale; Nikita Ens, para swimming, Meadow Lake; Shelby Newkirk, para swimming, Saskatoon; Nik Goncin, wheelchair basketball, Regina; Garrett Ostepchuk, wheelchair basketball, Regina; Ryan Rousell, wheelchair fencing, Asquith; gold medallist in women's hockey, Emily Clark, Saskatoon; bronze medallist in four-men bobsleigh, Ben Coakwell, Moose Jaw; bronze medallist in snowboard slopestyle, Mark McMorris, Regina; Graeme Fish, long-track speed skating, Moose Jaw. Marsha Hudey, long-track speed skating, White City; Adam Cracknell, men's hockey, Prince Albert; double bronze medallist in para Nordic, Brittany Hudak, Prince Albert; silver medallist in para snowboard, Lisa DeJong, Biggar.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, that all of these members please join me in congratulating these Olympic and Paralympic athletes who worked so hard and who represented Saskatchewan and made us all proud. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to my colleagues for leave. Just in closing, I couldn't help but notice in the introductions that we have one that moved from Whitehorse to Saskatchewan and makes her home now in Saskatchewan.

I'd correct the member from Saskatoon Riversdale that had said our chef de mission makes her home in Calgary. She was quick to correct that. Catriona Le May Doan was quick to correct that this morning, where she said she lives in Calgary but her home will always be in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it's that love and affinity for this province that brings me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly someone who is no stranger to many if not all of us in this House. With us today is Heather Salloum. Heather is the executive director and the private secretary in the Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan.

And accompanying Heather today is the entire staff from Government House. Mr. Speaker, these are the folks that work alongside Heather to support His Honour — or His Honours, over the course of the last 18 years that Heather has worked and served — but today to support His Honour the Lieutenant Governor Russ Mirasty as he carries out his duties on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen.

Mr. Speaker, Heather's retiring at the end of this month after a long and distinguished career overseeing the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. This morning we welcomed Heather into our cabinet meeting so that we could thank her in person for her service to our province, Mr. Speaker, and then she was able to guide us on a number of decisions throughout that meeting this morning.

Mr. Speaker, during her 18 years in this position, Heather has served five of the province's Vice-Regal representatives, including our current Lieutenant Governor. Mr. Speaker, the Lieutenant Governor has an important role in our democratic system or our democracy. The Vice-Regal summons and dissolves this legislature, delivers the Throne Speech, and gives Royal Assent to each of the laws that we put forward on the floor of this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, there's much more to the job, in fact, than what just goes on on the floor of this legislature. In Saskatchewan we have been blessed throughout the years with Lieutenant Governors who have been deeply engaged not only in this House but in communities across the province. They have criss-crossed the province, connecting with people far and wide, literally from corner to corner of Saskatchewan. And behind this effort for nearly two decades now has been the reassuring and dignified presence of Heather Salloum.

Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate that Heather took the responsibility of running the Lieutenant Governor's office, and she took that responsibility very, very seriously. She is an organized and capable person. That we can all attest to. But she is professional most certainly in every respect and in every detail of the job. She has a deep understanding and respect for the monarchy and the role that it plays in our political system here in the province of Saskatchewan and the role that it plays in our society more generally.

And she knows Saskatchewan. She has a respect and an understanding of the history and of the traditions of this place as well as the traditions and the history of our province.

Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that Heather's contributions to our province go far beyond her work and her career at Government House. Prior to assuming her current position, she served as a teacher and as an educational administrator for a number of years. And she's also been very active as a volunteer in the community, serving on a number of boards and contributing her time and her energy to a variety of organizations. Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that Heather will remain engaged in the community for many years to come.

It's at this point, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to join me in extending a very heartfelt thank you to Heather Salloum for a job that was extremely well done, and wish her the very best as she begins a well-deserved retirement, and welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Premier in welcoming Heather Salloum to her Legislative Assembly and congratulating her on her retirement.

I didn't realize she was retiring. I'm heartbroken to hear that. I hope it doesn't mean that she will be a stranger to us.

I think, as the Premier so well mentioned, her decades of service not just to the LGs [Lieutenant Governor] in this province but to this province as a whole through her work, paid and otherwise, will show that she likely will continue to be a very active member of her community. And I do hope that means that we will get to see her as much, hopefully as often as we do now, although she is allowed to have a little bit of rest. I just don't want her to rest too much because I will miss her too much.

On behalf of the official opposition, I just want to join with the Premier in welcoming her, congratulating her, thanking her, and wishing her all the best.

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — I ask leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I would like to introduce 23 public service employees seated in the Speaker's gallery, in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. They are here today to take part in the parliamentary program for the public service. The program includes a tour of the Legislative Building; briefings presented by various branches of the Legislative Assembly Service and Executive Council; an opportunity to sit in the Speaker's gallery, which they're doing today, to observe question period and other House business; brief meetings with members of both sides of the House and with you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm privileged to be able to speak with them this afternoon alongside yourself, and it's something that I'm really looking forward to.

The participants are employees from the following ministries: the Public Service Commission, Education, Energy and Resources, Highways, Immigration and Career Training, Environment, Government Relations, Trade and Export Development, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, and the Legislative Assembly Service. Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming these visitors to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming these 23 public servants to their legislature. I very much look forward to presenting to you later on this afternoon on behalf of the official opposition and to taking all of your varied and hopefully colourful questions. I'll answer as honestly as I can. Thank you very much. Welcome.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I ask for leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Mr. Speaker, to you, through you, I would like to recognize the following Nations that have come to their legislature — a big wave. I just want to give a shout-out to Kahkewistahaw First Nation, their leader, Chief Evan Taypotat, and his council member as well as his lands and resources team and his trust.

I also would like to recognize Onion Lake Cree Nation and their council members. I welcome them here, as well as their duty-to-consult technicians, their energy, justice, environmental and lands, health, and intergovernmental departments.

I also want to recognize Birch Narrows Dene Nation council member and the director of operations, and also George Gordon First Nation councillors.

And finally I would like to give a special shout-out and recognition to my dear, dear little friend — or actually tall friend — David Beninger. So I welcome all of them here and I ask all members to join me in welcoming these folks to their legislature.

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to be done by supper, I will not ask for leave for an extended introduction. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome all the First Nations leaders that are here in their Chamber today, Mr. Speaker. I think we're going to be hearing something on duty-to-consult. But I'd like to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly and thank them for all the service they do to their First Nations. Thank you.

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

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery, I want to welcome Amy Ewart and Sharon Griffiths. Amy is a good family friend. She works at the Autism Resource Centre and does some great work, and her daughter is actually our babysitter.

And joining them is Julie Phillips. Julie is from Whitehorse, which seems to be a theme; so we are recruiting, Julie, and you can make your home here. But it is her first visit to Saskatchewan and coming to our Legislative Assembly was on her bucket list. And I look forward to touring around the building with them later today. So welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to introduce a friend of mine in the west gallery, Darcy Bohach. I mean, Darcy never had the opportunity to ever go to the Olympics or compete, but he was an ardent hockey coach. And who knows where all of the kids that he had the opportunity to work with, where their futures will lead them? So please join me in welcoming Darcy Bohach to his Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents in the northeast of our province in through Preeceville and Hudson Bay, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the inadequate situation on Highway 9, the unsafe conditions that travellers are facing. Of course, this has a dramatic impact on all that are utilizing it, dramatic impact on the municipalities, on industry in the area, on those that are farming, and for tourism as well, Mr. Speaker.

The prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan 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.

[14:00]

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

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Proud to be on my feet again to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly calling for home supports for older adults in Saskatchewan.

I think that a lot of folks, when we eventually make our way out of this pandemic, will be looking to see what is going to change as we envision care for all of us as we age in this province, something none of us can avoid. But something that's been brought to my attention by these petitioners is that older adults and seniors want to age in their homes, in their community.

I also want to recognize that older adults engage in many areas of our society as volunteers, as coaches, as community members who are engaged in all sorts of things. And one of the things we can do to improve that engagement of our community is to ensure that they're able to age in place in their homes, and that they'll get the support that they need to stay there, supports that go beyond health care needs to meet other lifestyle needs, the types of things that often drive older adults out of their homes into communal living settings.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to work with older adults, stakeholders, and municipalities to design a home supports program that will allow seniors to age with dignity and autonomy in their homes and communities.

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

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present a petition calling on 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 for small cities and towns; that health care workers and their families are valuable assets in Saskatchewan communities and local economies; and that 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.

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

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise today and present our petition once again calling for pay equity legislation. Mr. Speaker, pay equity legislation is needed to

address the fact that female-dominated jobs and professions are systemically undervalued and chronically underpaid. The undersigned residents of the province would like to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan is one of only four provinces that does not have pay equity legislation, despite the fact that the Human Rights Commission recommended such legislation over 25 years ago; that Saskatchewan has one of the highest gender wage gaps in Canada which is the result of systemic gender discrimination in compensation for work that must be corrected with pay equity legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I'll now read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to introduce pay equity legislation.

The petition today has been signed by residents of Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be on my feet today to present the following petition. The folks who signed this petition wish to bring to your attention the following: we only have 10 per cent of Crown land left. This government has been auctioning off Crown land and leases to the highest bidder. They haven't meaningfully consulted with impacted communities. They are breaching the treaty relationship and restricting access to traditional hunting, fishing, trapping, and medicine picking. The first right of refusal needs to be offered to First Nations in the treaty land entitlement process when Crown lands are being sold, and the province is leaving the taxpayers of this province footing the bills for its mistakes and losses in courts.

I'll read the prayer:

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

The folks who signed this petition reside in Wadena, Punnichy, and Regina. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I'd just like to remind our guests in the gallery not to take part in the proceedings. Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

First-of-Its-Kind Training Program for Volunteer Firefighters

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know that Saskatchewan wouldn't be what it is without the contribution of volunteers. Volunteers give back to our

communities in a variety of meaningful ways, but perhaps none more so than volunteer firefighters. Mr. Speaker, rural communities and rural residents have come to rely on volunteers to respond in emergency situations.

In recognition of this, our government introduced the volunteer firefighter tax credit. This acknowledges the difficult and demanding work, recognizes the need for ongoing training, and hopefully encourages others to volunteer.

Now, Mr. Speaker, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] is investing to train and equip volunteer firefighters who respond to vehicle collisions on Saskatchewan highways. Mr. Speaker, volunteer firefighters are often the first to respond to collisions on highways and rural roads. As a past volunteer firefighter, I know how essential it is that these departments are up to date with evolving tool developments and adaptations around new car designs. The objectives of the \$5.6 million program are to fund training courses that allow volunteer firefighters to meet minimum standards for auto extrication and to purchase tools and equipment for support and training.

Mr. Speaker, this program will be the first of its kind in Canada, and we look forward to the added peace of mind it will provide. I now ask all members to join me in acknowledging and thanking volunteer firefighters for their commitment and service to Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Emerald Park Machining and Hydraulics Business Wins Paragon Award

Ms. A. Young: — Why thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to celebrate the Regina & District Chamber of Commerce who hosted the 23rd edition of the Paragon Awards last Friday night. I was lucky enough to attend and what a fantastic opportunity to marvel at our incredible local business community right here in Regina.

In particular I'd like to offer sincere congratulations to the good folks at Xtended Hydraulics & Machine who were awarded with this year's Paragon Award for Diversity and Inclusion. Mr. Speaker, Rob Tebb and his family started Xtended in Emerald Park in 2013 and are a 100 per cent Indigenous-owned local business who provide machining and hydraulic cylinder manufacturing and repair services for many heavy industries, primarily mining, oil and gas. Their family has roots of which they are proud, going back in this province for 10 generations.

Now the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Regina Rosemont and I, as well as more recently my colleagues from Regina Douglas Park and Regina Lakeview, had the opportunity to visit and tour Xtended's facilities where they are revolutionizing pipeline maintenance with the magic of machining. In addition to the innovative and quality services they provide, Xtended is an unapologetic leader in the field of corporate diversity and have taken steps to operate as an equal opportunity employer, ensuring half their employees are Indigenous and at least half of management positions are filled by women.

I invite all members to join me in recognizing the Tebb family, the Regina & District Chamber of Commerce, and all the truly remarkable nominees and winners at the 23rd Annual Paragon Awards.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

Balgonie Fire Chief Retires after 41 Years of Service

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of attending Fire Chief Dave Campbell's retirement celebration on March 26th in Balgonie at the Multiplex, Mr. Speaker. Dave joined the Balgonie department in 1980. He became the chief in 1990. Dave retired in December of 2021 — unfortunately no celebration because of COVID; that's why we just held it this past month — after 41 years of volunteer service for the Balgonie fire service, 31 of those years as the fire chief, Mr. Speaker.

The Balgonie fire department attends about 80 to 100 calls a year. That means those volunteers are on call 24-7, 365 days a year, showing dedication to the community and area around those communities is exceptional.

Mr. Speaker, Dave has received a number of awards, not the least of which is the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee award and the Saskatchewan Protective Services Medal, 2009, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Dave has seen a lot of changes since he became fire chief, not to mention first responders and the training that goes into it, as well as overseeing the moving of a new fire hall into the community and the retrofit to make that fire hall such an asset for the community.

I want to thank Dave for all his service and especially, Mr. Speaker, enjoy many years of retirement. You deserve it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Bangladeshi Community Marks International Mother Language Day

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, on February 21st I was honoured to attend the International Mother Language Day celebrations held in Saskatoon by the Bangladeshi Community Association of Saskatchewan. It was a wonderful event with many in attendance.

February 21st is significant to the people of Bangladesh and their descendants around the world. The fight for Bangla language rights accelerated in 1948, and it all came to a head on February 21st, 1952 when police opened fire on a peaceful Bangladeshi student march in then East Pakistan, today Bangladesh.

International Mother Language Day, intentionally on the day of this tragic event, recognizes that languages and multiculturalism can advance inclusion. In a statement from the UN [United Nations]:

Languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving

and developing our tangible and intangible heritage. All moves to promote the dissemination of mother tongues will serve not only to encourage linguistic diversity and multilingual education but also to develop fuller awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions throughout the world and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the organizers, in particular Mohammad Azad, president of the Bangladeshi Community Association of Saskatchewan, for inviting me to take part in this very special event.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing the significance of International Mother Language Day to our province's Bangladeshi community and to wish the association continued success. Thank you.

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

Unity Family Inspires the Next Generation of Sled Dog Racers

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For Randy Sander and Amanda Grant of Unity, the sport of dogsledding has been a long-time passion, and it has been a goal of theirs to inspire another generation of sled dog racers. Fifteen-year-old Kaden Bertoia joined the Sander-Grant dogsled teams and helps work with the couple's 34 dogs. He does training with one of the race teams as well as works with the retired race dogs.

Mr. Speaker, Kaden is a natural on the sleigh, which has been attributed to his snowboarding abilities. He has learned how important the bond between a musher and his or her dogs is. It is estimated that Kaden has put in an average of 20 to 25 hours per week in dog training, and another six to eight hours feeding and caring for the dogs, maintaining the trails, and completing other chores.

Mr. Speaker, they competed in the Torch River Run at Christopher Lake in March. Amanda, her sister Natalie, and Kaden had three dogsled teams, consisting of eight dogs each, in the race. They finished in fifth, sixth, and seventh place, crossing the finish line just milliseconds apart.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of the Assembly join me in congratulating Randy, Amanda, Natalie, Kaden, and other team members, and wishing them well as they continue to pursue their passion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Nokomis Agricultural Society Continues Long-Standing Traditions

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we know, the roots of agriculture in Saskatchewan are strong and run deep. That said, Mr. Speaker, I would put forth that any discussion about this province's ag history should include mention of the Nokomis Agricultural Society. Before bubble gum, the yo-yo, World War I, and the Model T, the Nokomis Ag Society has been around. Further, its mandate of promoting agriculture and rural

living has remained unwavering after these many years. Since 1908, when our province was a mere three years old, the Ag Society has brought the local community together by hosting, in addition to other initiatives, its agricultural fair.

This past summer my family and I had the privilege of partaking in this year's version of the tradition-rich event. In addition to the myriad of parade entries, local baking, slo-pitch tournament, cabaret, and livestock shows, residents of Nokomis and surrounding area were treated to quad and lawnmower pulls. Mr. Speaker, the MLA for Arm River has full intention of putting his own lawnmower to the test this summer in the competition.

Mr. Speaker, the longevity of Nokomis Ag Society speaks directly to the resilience and community spirit that are alive in Nokomis and rural communities across this great province. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to help me to recognize and congratulate one of Saskatchewan's longest-standing community organizations, the Nokomis Agricultural Society. Thank you.

[14:15]

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

Saskatchewan A Global Leader in Mining Sector Investment Attractiveness

Ms. A. Ross: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan remains the best jurisdiction in Canada and is now second best in the world for mining investment. This, according to the highly anticipated annual Fraser Institute survey of mining companies. And we were only two points away from beating Western Australia, the leading jurisdiction. Saskatchewan received this ranking based on factors such as stable regulations, competitive tax regimes, infrastructure, and geological attractiveness.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that Saskatchewan is a critical minerals powerhouse. We are a global leader in uranium and potash production, and a key producer of many emerging critical minerals. Saskatchewan's mining sector generated \$8.6 billion in sales in 2021, the second-highest level on record. We recently announced record potash sales and uranium production ramping up and advancements in helium and lithium technologies and exploration.

Mr. Speaker, the mining sector supports tens of thousands of jobs and is a key economic driver. Our government will continue to make Saskatchewan the best place in the world for companies to grow their businesses and produce sustainable products. Western Australia better watch out for Saskatchewan in next year's survey. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, our health care system is in chaos, and this government is not only minimizing the seriousness of the situation, they aren't being transparent with Saskatchewan

people on what is really going on. Through an access to information request, Postmedia learned 78 health services were suspended in February. This includes things like surgeries, home care, and primary care.

Around the same time, the Premier chose to open the floodgates with no way to mitigate or monitor the pandemic. As the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] predicted, we are now stuck in a lengthened COVID wave, one that is denying people like Brennon Dulle who came here yesterday, the care they need. Why did the Premier choose to go down this path knowing full well his choices would derail our health system again?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we were very transparent about the services that we had to slow down in Saskatchewan in order to deal with the COVID wave, Mr. Speaker. We were in the media talking about it all of the time on what services were . . . And we didn't want to make this decision, but we felt we had to to be able to make sure to protect the overall health care system.

Mr. Speaker, we made the decision to reduce and eventually eliminate our public health restrictions based on the advice of Dr. Shahab. What we did is we looked at what we were happening at that moment in time, and there was lots of predictors of what might and what could happen. What we are seeing is that we have a level of around 140 people that are admitted across our province that are COVID-related incidents, and I'm confident that the health care system can take care of those individuals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister says he was in the media all of the time. I think the minister has a different definition of what "all of the time" means than probably everybody else on this planet. Mr. Speaker, this information should have been shared with Saskatchewan people. It wasn't.

We also learned the SHA was planning for a surging COVID response with 20 per cent less staff and that provincial officials discussed asking police, fire, and city staff to help fill roles in the province's COVID-19 response, as if they don't have anything else on their plates, Mr. Speaker. Why did the government make the decision to withhold this information and plow ahead without a plan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it very interesting that the members opposite in one question period a couple of weeks ago said we didn't have a plan. Now they're criticizing when we do plan. Which is it? We had a plan that if things changed — we said it very publicly in the media — if things changed, both the Premier and I said that we would reassess at that time, Mr. Speaker. We have been very transparent about that.

If the members of the opposition don't think that we should plan, could they please stand up and say that? Because we need to be

able to plan for all scenarios within the SHA. If there is another COVID surge, if there is another wave, if there is another variant, we should be planning for that. That's the due diligence on behalf of the SHA, the Ministry of Health, and the government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, a plan isn't considering to ask other officials like police to pick up the slack that this government is failing on. We also learned last night in committee that the government quietly dismantled the provincial emergency operations centre in the beginning of March. Curious to know how the plan works there, Mr. Speaker.

They did this knowing that COVID was in fact not over. And to top it off, the Public Safety Agency that oversaw PEOC [provincial emergency operations centre] didn't budget even a cent for COVID response, not a single dollar for what the government knows is not over.

Mr. Speaker, it couldn't be more clear this government has lost the plot and isn't relaying information about this pandemic to Saskatchewan people. Stop keeping Saskatchewan people in the dark. Will the minister commit to resuming regular briefings with officials and Dr. Shahab today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, I just have to correct the record. We have over \$95 million budgeted in that. If that's not one cent to the opposition, Mr. Speaker, I don't know. Maybe they didn't read the budget — \$95 million for contingencies, for PPE [personal protective equipment], for the SHA, and other.

Mr. Speaker, we have been working, again, with Dr. Shahab on this since day one. Some of the things that Dr. Shahab said in his media avail last week were, I think it's a balance of doing the things that we enjoy, but also aware of what the risk factors are, Mr. Speaker, what the transmission rate is, and the province taking the proper precautions.

Mr. Speaker, the precautions that we have made is we've made vaccines available to everybody in this province. First dose, second dose, first booster dose, and now we're moving into our second booster dose. On top of that, we've got 19 million rapid tests out there, so people that are educated about COVID know what to do. If they test positive, if you're not feeling well, Mr. Speaker, then you should be staying home and isolating yourself.

But what I can assure the people of Saskatchewan that our hospital system is operating, at or near capacity, and we want to make sure that the people of Saskatchewan get the treatment that they deserve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Duty-to-Consult Process

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, no transparency and a dismissive attitude. Wish I could say I was shocked.

Today the galleries have been filled with guests from First Nations from across the province. They are here because they are frustrated with this government's broken duty-to-consult policies. They are tired of being shut out from decisions that impact their land and their livelihoods. They want to see a commitment to overhauling the ways this government consults First Nations before plowing ahead with plans that impact their traditions and impacts their inherent treaty rights.

They are here and they want to meet with the Premier today. Will the Premier come to his feet and commit publicly to meeting with these First Nations leaders to hear their concerns today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. I meet with First Nations leaders from across the province regularly. I'd be pleased to meet with a delegation that is here today following question period at our first opportunity. And I'd open up that invitation to all of our ministers as well as government members throughout the course of the year, to your MLA, to continue to communicate with this government so that we can move forward on important issues, Mr. Speaker. Important issues like duty-to-consult, important issues of how we engage everyone in the economic opportunities that we have lying ahead here in this province and to ensure that we can discuss and set up some of those opportunities in the months and years ahead.

Mr. Speaker, some that were announced in this most recent budget, like the Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation, opening up pathways to ensure that there is funding available for Indigenous participation and actual ownership of resource-based projects here in this province. Ensuring that we can mirror what has been successful in the forestry industry, mirror what has been successful in the strongest gaming agreement across Canada, the gaming agreement right here in Saskatchewan. And ensure that, as our economy grows in this province, that it is growing and including everyone in that economic growth and those opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. Last session the Minister of Government Relations stood in this House with a gallery full of First Nation leaders and felt it necessary to educate these leaders and myself about duty-to-consult. Mr. Speaker, leaders I mentioned above in my introductions came to their legislature and wrote letters voicing their frustrations with this government, their lack of meaningful duty-to-consult. Will this minister and all ministers do better than dismissive letters? Will they agree to meet regularly with leaders who are with us today?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is committed to the duty-to-consult legal framework, Mr. Speaker, but I can tell you that in June of 2010, an extensive engagement with First Nations, Métis locals, industry, and other stakeholders put the duty-to-consult framework in place. That has been 12 years, Mr. Speaker.

I have said on a number of times and in committee to that very member that this will be reviewed. In fact, engagement will be starting and a full engagement on the duty-to-consult will take place over the next year. It will involve First Nations. It will involve Métis. It will involve industry and other stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. That commitment has been made in committee on a number of occasions, and this government will follow through with that commitment.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — You know, all we hear is smoke and mirrors and lip service. What I've heard in the past is we are going to refresh duty-to-consult. Mr. Speaker, these leaders have serious concerns. They are tired of seeing thousands of acres of Crown land and leases on the auction block without meaningful consultation.

At the current rate this government is selling off Crown lands and leases, there will be no Crown land left to exercise treaty and inherent rights. Indigenous communities have serious questions and concerns, and this government is minimizing and deflecting. I've heard over and over again from Indigenous leaders that the current duty-to-consult process is broken — broken. So does this minister believe one-off meetings or a registered letter qualify as meaningful duty-to-consult?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my previous answer, a full engagement will take place. It has been 12 years since the framework has been put in place. We need to look at that and engage First Nations, Métis communities, stakeholders, as I've said.

The other thing that we have done in the duty-to-consult that is taking place right now, Mr. Speaker, we've increased that budget by 100 per cent this year. Over \$400,000 is made available when the duty-to-consult is triggered. Those funds will go to First Nations so they can engage in meaningful duty-to-consult, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is more work to be done on this front, but we're moving in that direction. And that engagement will take place over the year 2022.

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

Emergency Room Capacity

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Having recent first-hand experience with the pressures in a Regina hospital ER [emergency room], I wasn't surprised to see reports that there are now partitioned hospital beds in the waiting room of St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon, but in no way does that make it acceptable. The minister says these are just seasonal pressures and that health care workers have it under control. Well they aren't, and they don't. And he'd know that if he would do his job, show up, and see the reality.

To the minister: does he think patients being examined and treated in ER beds in the waiting room is good enough for Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I was made aware of this, but there were lots of things within that media outlet that weren't completely accurate. There was . . . Obviously, we had an influx of people coming into the hospital. At one specific moment in time, we created an overflow area. It was, from what I understand, it was utilized for a very, very short period of time and then normal services would resume, Mr. Speaker.

This is something that does happen occasionally within our hospital systems, Mr. Speaker. We do have influx and some of them are seasonal issues, but sometimes there are things that are out of the health care region's controls. There are accidents. There are heart attacks. There are emergencies that we have to deal with. Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that this health care system is operating the best it possibly can. And obviously, people waiting in the hallways is not acceptable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member Saskatoon Fairview.

[14:30]

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, I saw the picture with my own eyes. This is gaslighting. Mr. Speaker, these beds are in plain view of a window. No privacy whatsoever. No access to oxygen. No call bells. No dignity. No safety. And this isn't just a Saskatoon issue.

Staff in emergency departments in Regina say it's the worst they've seen. They are burnt-out, and they are afraid for patients' safety. Dr. Geller, an emergency medicine doctor from Regina, shared last night:

Nineteen times last week there has been a call-out for extra help in the ER in Regina using agreed-to criteria. Nineteen times the patient volumes have been at unsafe levels.

The calls for help are going out, but they're not being answered, Mr. Speaker. When will the Premier acknowledge this problem is real and take real action to make our emergency rooms safe for patient care today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And this is why that there was a huge cash injection within our budget, Mr. Speaker, which I'll remind the Assembly that those members voted against.

We are opening an urgent care centre in Regina for exactly this reason, Mr. Speaker, to be able to take the pressure off the emergency rooms. We will soon be opening one up in Saskatoon. What we've also done is make sure that we have the ICU [intensive care unit] beds capacity. We've increased that from 79 up to 90, have plans to increase that more. We also have 10 high-acuity beds in Regina. This is all out there to be able to make sure that we are taking pressure off the emergency room.

As I identified before, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that the health care system is operating at its optimal capacity. But the millions of dollars that this budget just injected into the health care system, after a two-year pandemic, record-setting numbers that we have put in our health care system to be able to make sure that we are alleviating the pressures that are out there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Pointing fingers and not taking responsibility for the fact that ER patients are in the waiting room, are being treated in the waiting room, Mr. Speaker. This is not business as usual. These are not normal pressures, Mr. Speaker.

This government used to say that they cared about ER waits. In 2012 Brad Wall proclaimed that no one would wait for an emergency room in 2020. That target got watered down and watered down to the point where there isn't one today, Mr. Speaker, and the waits just keep getting longer.

The emergency department waits and patient flow initiative was dismantled. This initiative was supposed to address the exact issues that we're dealing with today — over-capacity pressures, patient safety issues, hallway medicine, and now even waiting room medicine. Saskatchewan patients today are waiting longer in unsafe conditions because this government gave up on our ERs. Why did this government scrap this initiative? And what will the minister do today to take the pressure off?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to identify that this isn't unique to Saskatchewan. There are challenges across our country right now within our health care system. But what the difference is, Mr. Speaker, is we have a plan, and we have a budget to be able to work on those with the health care workers, with the management of the SHA, and also our affiliates, Mr. Speaker.

We have an international recruitment that we have been talking about, our four-point plan to recruit people, train people, incentivize people, and also retain the people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, to be able to meet the needs of this health care.

There is not . . . I have mentioned this before, Mr. Speaker. There is not a switch that I can flip to fix the health care system immediately. But we are working with the health care system to be able to make sure that this government is investing in the front-line health care workers and the equipment and the facilities to be able to provide that care for the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, I visited the emergency room as a patient. I saw what it's really like. The Premier refused to visit overcrowded ICUs last year. Last week when we asked the minister to visit the children's hospital and hear why it's bursting at the seams, he declined. I'm ready to join him, to walk the halls with him and to see the reality. Will the minister join me in

visiting ERs in Saskatoon and Regina? Will he take the time to go see with his own eyes the disaster that his choices are creating for people who are in urgent need of care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I do tour hospitals, Mr. Speaker, as well as the Minister of Rural and Remote Health and members on this side. We all stay in contact with our health care system in our own constituencies. I get updates from what is happening within the health care system and the SHA to be able to find out what the decisions that we need. They are providing us with the information, and we are providing the support back to them, Mr. Speaker.

But to say that we should be traipsing up and down the halls of hospitals is just irresponsible, Mr. Speaker. They are busy doing what they need to be doing, treating patients. This is something . . . And again I will reiterate this. That is irresponsible that we should be traipsing up. And at the time when they were talking about the visitations to the ICU, we weren't even allowing families in to visit, but they had requested that the Premier and I go in and visit. That is just completely irresponsible, Mr. Speaker.

I get my updates from my officials and from the people of the SHA to be able to provide the information, so I can make the decisions to support them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Education

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, that is wild hypocrisy from that minister, who just last week encouraged all the other leaders to get out of their towers and visit our hospitals. It's unbelievable.

Now on Monday I had a question about the Education minister's comments at the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] spring assembly from last week, where the minister was asked about a major spike in funding for independent schools compared to our publicly funded school system. His response to the delegates in the room was to assign blame and to point the finger at everyone else but himself. He said that school divisions and trustees need to ask themselves why families are choosing to leave public schools and go to independent schools.

Does the minister stand by that offensive comment?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the member opposite is taking the context out of that question that I asked of the trustees at the SSBA late last week, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe it was offensive and I do stand by it.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, those who were in the room know

exactly what happened.

Chinook School Division, as a result of funding shortfalls, will have to cut EA [educational assistant] hours next year. That's on top of losing 20 teachers, 20 teachers lost next year due to cuts in this minister's budget. This means fewer hours of support for kids with intensive needs, less help for our kids with the greatest needs of support.

Does the minister agree that kids with intensive needs should not be losing any supports for learning?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we provide for the ability for parents to have choice when it comes to educating their children, whether that be in a historical high school, whether that be an associate school that is associated with a school board, whether that be a qualified independent school, whether that be attending a Catholic school even if your family isn't Catholic. We provide that choice in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I know when the question was raised at the SSBA . . . if school trustees want to know, Mr. Speaker, I think it does do no harm to ask the parents who have made that other choice, to ask them why they've made that choice. I don't know why that is an offensive question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the funding in providing for supports, that's exactly what we've done in this budget: \$6 million to increase the supports for learning budget to \$299 million this year, and \$7 million to pay for more EAs in the classroom — 200 full-time positions being created. Thank you.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, that minister knows that these additional EAs won't even get us back to 2017 numbers, let alone the EAs that are being cut as a result of this year's budget. Now it was great to hear the minister finally acknowledge this morning on the radio that school divisions will indeed be facing inflationary costs. He even noted that some rural school divisions will see upwards of 10 per cent of their budgets used for transportation costs that are going up.

Now with higher enrolment and higher utility, higher transportation and fuel costs, school divisions know that they're being forced to make cuts to their classrooms. This means that students are going to lose access to the support of adults, the support of professionals who are there to help with classroom learning. Students with high needs won't receive the support they need and classrooms are going to balloon with fewer and fewer teachers, just like last year when we lost 352 teachers with over 1,600 more new students.

Will the minister finally increase funding to schools so that no school will open in the fall with fewer supports in classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I did

acknowledge inflationary pressures that school divisions would be facing, on budget day. I acknowledged the inflationary pressures on fuel prices in this very Chamber last week. So I don't what he's saying that this morning for the first time the minister acknowledged that. I've been saying that since budget day, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of additional supports in the classroom, we did put additional funding in previous years for EAs. That's what it was intended for, and school divisions decided not to use those monies. They decided to put those into other positions, non-EA positions. That's exactly why we created a fund for EAs, to be used to hire EAs. That's what parents are asking for. We know that that's what teachers need to have that additional support, and that's why we are making that conditional funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Suicide Prevention Strategy

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, this is the ninth day this spring I rise on behalf of Saskatchewan families, today the Roberts family, who have lost a loved one to suicide. When will we see a real plan to save Saskatchewan lives?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And on behalf of the government, I extend my deepest sympathies to the Roberts family on the tragedy that they have experienced.

Mr. Speaker, in May of 2020 the government released the Pillars for Life suicide prevention plan. We have a number of different initiatives that we fund in this province right now, as an example, the funding that was provided to the Muskwa Lake Wellness Camp up in Pinehouse announced back in December, Mr. Speaker.

We also fund the Roots of Hope suicide prevention project, Mr. Speaker, which has been done in collaboration with the Mental Health Commission of Canada. It is the first of its kind, a made-in-Canada type of initiative. There are eight communities across this nation that are participating in Roots of Hope. And I'm proud to say that three of those communities are here in Saskatchewan where we offer the program in La Ronge, Meadow Lake, and Buffalo Narrows.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to make these important investments into this very priority area for this government and for all people in Saskatchewan.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 609 — *The Meaningful Duty to Consult Act*

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 609, *The Meaningful Duty to Consult Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Saskatoon Centre that Bill No. 609 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 member from Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — At the next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDER FOR A PRIVATE BILL

Bill No. 905 — *The Amity Trust Act, 2022*

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to an order of the Assembly dated April 5th, 2022 the petitioners have met the conditions outlined in the order. Therefore pursuant to rule 102, I move that Bill No. 905, *The Amity Trust Act, 2022* be deemed to be read for the first time and be ordered for second reading on the next private members' day.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Batoche that Bill No. 905, *The Amity Trust Act, 2022* be deemed to be read the first time and ordered for a second reading on the next private members' day. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

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 Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on

my feet here today and entering again into debate on Bill No. 70, *The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 2021*. As you'll recall, I had an opportunity to speak on this bill earlier, and it's given me an opportunity to further reflect and listen to the comments made by my colleagues here on this side of the House. And there's a few things that stand out for me right now that I want to touch on.

[14:45]

First of all, in all of the debate through question period, in response to media requests, the government has failed to provide a justification or any set of reasonable arguments as to the need for this unprecedented and significant change to the manner in which these legislative grounds are protected — not just the grounds, but also all of the people that work in this building — and also the legislative privilege that the role of the Sergeant-at-Arms ensures through the various activities that they undertake to protect and ensure that those entering the building and the grounds are doing so in a safe manner, while at the same time balancing that with access by the public to undertake public demonstrations and ensure that their voices are heard. Nothing that we've heard from the minister responsible for this bill has in any way substantiated the need for the drastic measures that this bill is proposing.

I do think that it's important to reflect on the context again and the events that have led up to these changes. Our leader spoke very eloquently a few weeks ago on, you know, the situation we have here in Canada right now with an erosion of confidence in legislative democracy, in the parliamentary system. We've seen it in the ways that misinformation has clouded the views and reason of regular citizens and caused them to charge on Ottawa with the convoy and in a clear sign of a lack of confidence in our democratic process. And I fear that here in Saskatchewan that, you know, the same sorts of concerns are present.

And I think it calls to when our government is taking measures, such as it has here, that have not followed any due process in either substantiating these changes or bringing them forward to the Board of Internal Economy, of working collaboratively with a whole-of-government approach to both communicate what their concerns are with the current system — as I've said already, those have never been substantiated — and allow for a conversation to occur around what is the best approach moving forward.

It displays an utter lack of respect for the institutions of this legislature. Not only those of the Sergeant-at-Arms, but also all members of this legislature. The Board of Internal Economy exists to provide that impartial forum under which matters that pertain to all members can be discussed, matters related to security, as this bill is relating to, so that, you know, amicable solutions can be identified, that there can be buy-in, that there can be agreement.

And it really makes me question the true motives behind it. And I mean, it's a well-regarded practice, a best practice, that when you're undertaking change that you don't go about it in a unilateral fashion. You don't go about it without undertaking consultation, without listening to all of those stakeholders, and in this case members who are being affected by a bill to ensure that you're going about it in a right way.

Now as I said, to be clear, in the first instance the need for change has not been established. But second of all, the process in which it's been undertaken has neither been done in a good way, in a way that displays good intent, that is looking to work forward in a conciliatory manner. And the lack of that due process suggests to me a total disregard of respect for this institution as a legislature, and it also speaks broadly about the broader lack of respect, I believe, that this government is displaying through their actions here today. As I said already, that is further exacerbated by a context in which we are seeing, more broadly speaking, a lack of respect for democracy and a pervasive nature of misinformation that further works to erode that respect. And when people lose respect in their democratic institutions, we risk falling into anarchy, as has already been mentioned by my members.

What we're seeing here ultimately is a power grab. It is a wild overreach. It is an attempt to further centralize power and control by this government in a way that will attempt to ensure that those who have any disagreement with the government of the day, that they can clamp down and quash that dissent.

I think that that is going to be a fundamental loss of democratic right that, as has already been discussed extensively in this House, is vitally important, particularly at times when we have issues such as COVID and, you know, a wide disagreement on the best way forward, or cases where we have minorities and those without other means or power base lose the opportunity to bring their issues forward.

We want to be encouraging healthy debate, healthy dialogue, a healthy democracy here in Saskatchewan. That is the way forward. And we see increasing threats on all fronts. What we really need to do is ensure that we're strengthening our democratic institutions, not undermining them, not eroding them, not centralizing power within the hands of a minister who is not accountable to the entire Legislative Assembly. And that is certainly what is worrying all members on this side very greatly.

So what is being proposed here with these legislative amendments is going to create a lot of confusion, a lot of uncertainty on a very practical level. I mean, in its broad strokes this is a bill that breaks with tradition and totally upends the current system. And I would argue that if indeed there are threats, and in case the world has changed as the minister had indicated, that this is not the time to be uprooting what has been a working system that has protected and provided the security services that keep us all safe here in the building.

What they are doing is they are increasing the level of risk. They are increasing the level of uncertainty, and ultimately putting us all in a position where we are going to be less safe than we are here today.

So in conclusion, I would say that this bill is reckless. It does not follow a respectful process as is provided for within the Board of Internal Economy. There has been no justification for its need. And furthermore, in fact what it has done is it has put us further at risk, because if indeed there are greater security risks, those should be coming forward for discussion at the BOIE [Board of Internal Economy]. And for all of those reasons, I cannot support this bill. So, Mr. Speaker, at this time I will ask leave to adjourn Bill 70.

The Speaker: — The member has asked leave to adjourn Bill 70. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Ms. Ritchie: — At this time I move to adjourn Bill 70.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the House 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 Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join on Bill No. 79, *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act, 2022*.

I guess initially any time . . . And we know that many of our Indigenous communities and organizations, our businesses, are doing great work out there. And we commend the work they're doing when it looks at some of the operations that our Indigenous leaders and our communities and our Indigenous men and women out there are running companies and actually are moving.

It's very important to acknowledge that, and I thank them for their good work. Because they're hiring a lot of Indigenous people, and we know that we need good-paying jobs for all of our citizens of this good province. So I want to acknowledge that.

We have a fund, a new fund. The government, you know, went through a process, they're going to say. And I know we're going to have some opportunities in committee to ask some good questions. I want to make sure, who did they consult with? And some of the things I was wondering on when I was looking at this bill . . . And it's great there are some good dollars there helping with capital and moving forward to help business with loan guarantees, and I know that's important. And I know some of those businesses who will utilize it. It will be great. And that's great, and that's what we're supposed to do — partnerships. And that's important. We've always said that.

We need to consult. And we know, you know, what we've been saying, that First Nations and Métis need to be consulted, meaningful and true partners at the table. This is some good news. I mean, is there more that needs to be done? Yes, on the file when it comes to Indigenous people in our province. We know that. This government has not, I believe, has not done what leaders have said. There's many areas where they need to improve.

But having said that, they've got a fund. And I'm curious to see

if a board's going to be developed. Who will determine on these loans that will be guaranteed? Is it going to be a new board appointed? And if that's the case, we're going to have some questions. Because I look at, we have some good organizations right now. And I think about, you know, the First Nations have organizations that lend money to First Nations. We have our Métis, who have organization that develop and actually run, operate, and do some great work.

And I'm wondering why we wouldn't have consulted with those organizations that we already have lending out money, whether it's federal, provincial dollars. They're doing some great work and they help the industry and they're doing loans. And they're making sure that those organizations that apply for funding and have opportunities, whether it's, you know, Indigenous women, men, they do that. So I'm wondering why this government hadn't . . .

And I know in committee we're going to ask some tough questions, and I hope we get the answers. Why didn't they actually consult with those organizations, those that are already doing great work out there? And I thank them for the great work they have been doing for years. Why do we have to reinvent the wheel when you have two organizations, maybe three or four — I'm not sure how many are out there — that are First Nations and Métis that are doing great work? Why wouldn't we just work with them?

Instead we want to have our own. So who's going to benefit from that? Like, is there going to be a company that's going to oversee this? Somebody making money, you know, somebody who's out there saying, hey, why don't you set this up for me; I could run it for you guys and you pay me. Like, I'm curious to see.

[15:00]

There's going to be some questions. We want to find out who's going to make money. Is it going to be independent? Is it going to be . . . Who's going to appoint them? Is it going to be . . . So there are more questions, you know, I have, and hopefully the critic can get some answers.

So really at this point I know we've got other work we have to do, so I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill No. 79, *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act, 2022*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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 Deputy 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 80, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2022*. This is a new bill, Mr. Speaker, which will serve to create a single innovation agency by moving the Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation under the authority of Innovation Saskatchewan. SOCO [Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation] operates our province's two research parks, one of which is adjacent to the University of Regina, and the other, which is in my riding, is adjacent to the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

The purpose of Innovation Saskatchewan is to promote economic development and fund the research and technology sector in Saskatchewan. And as the minister noted in his remarks, the purpose of introducing this Act is to expand Innovation Saskatchewan's authority so that it will be responsible for operating our province's two research parks. This will involve SOCO being transferred from Crown Investments Corporation oversight to Innovation Saskatchewan oversight. The stated goals of this bill are to create a single point of contact for stakeholders to help grow the tech sector over the next 10 years, to create efficiencies, and to streamline services for research and development.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition is certainly in favour of growing our tech sector by 2030, and so you won't be hearing any objections from us on that front. But the finer details involved with this transfer are so far unknown to me, so for my part I am going to suspend judgment on this bill until we've had the opportunity to learn more around the logistics of that transfer.

At this stage I haven't been made aware of any pressing concerns relating to Bill 80 that have been brought to the opposition's attention; however, as always we encourage any affected stakeholders to reach out to the opposition and to our critic in particular, should they wish to flag any concerns with this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I know our critic will be actively engaging in stakeholder consultations around this bill, as is always the case. And so with that, Mr. Speaker, for my part I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 80, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2022*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 81

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. J. Harrison that **Bill No. 81** — *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I recognize you, and you're looking fine in your blue there today, I should say. It's a pleasure to enter in briefly here this afternoon

with respect to Bill No. 81. I'll be brief here today, Mr. Speaker.

Long have we pushed for the fair expediting of foreign credentials that are consistent with our regulatory bodies and ensure the standards that Saskatchewan and Canadian people expect, whether we're talking health and sciences and engineering and beyond, Mr. Speaker. So we've pushed on this front to ensure a fair expedited process for the recognition of foreign credentials. This is about allowing Saskatchewan people to live up to their full potential, allowing those that are coming from around the world to Saskatchewan to live up to their full potential and to contribute fully to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It's about fulfilling the promise of our province.

That being said, the devil's really going to be in the detail as to how this bill is organized and who's been consulted and making sure that there's not a host of unintended consequences, or to ensure that the government's not using this as an opportunity to undermine important rights and standards, Mr. Speaker, that all Saskatchewan people, all Canadians expect and deserve.

So there'll be a lot of consultation on this legislation. I'd invite anyone that cares about this piece of legislation to be engaged directly with the process. I'd invite them to be engaged with our respective critic, Mr. Speaker. We'll of course be dealing with this in due course through committees and asking questions and ensuring that this is being done in a thoughtful, even-handed way, that we understand both the intended consequences but the unintended consequences potentially, Mr. Speaker. And of course this connects with different areas: immigration, justice, and labour, Mr. Speaker. So I invite folks to share their views, concerns, and some of the aspects that maybe haven't been foreseen by government.

Ultimately our goal will be to ensure that we have a fair, expedited process for the recognition of foreign credentials, Mr. Speaker, but of course that respects the independence of the regulatory bodies, and in that ensures the high standards that Saskatchewan people and Canadians expect and deserve, Mr. Speaker.

But the fact of the matter is that in Saskatchewan today we have a lot of folks that have moved to Saskatchewan to build their lives from all over the world, many that haven't been able to live up to their full potential by way of practising, you know, their discipline or their area that they've studied, Mr. Speaker. So we need to make sure that we are being fair in extending that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, our province, built on an incredibly proud foundation of First Nations and Métis people in this province in our treaties, Mr. Speaker, has been built for generations with the enriching contributions of newcomers from around the world, waves upon waves of immigration. And we have important work to do on that front.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, knowing that this connects with many different areas, our critics will be engaged, and we invite people to connect with us. And at this point in time, I'll adjourn debate on Bill No. 81.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 82

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 82 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet for Bill No. 82, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2022*. This amendment is providing income tax initiatives that were announced in the budget, including an increase to the tax credit for value-added agriculture from 15 to 30 per cent for projects from 4 to 600 million, and also another one from 15 to 40 per cent for projects over 600 million. There's also an annual credit cap included and other updates on provincial income tax that were requested by Canada Revenue Agency.

You know, when I look at the incentives that are included in this Act, I mean of course value-add has always been the opportunity and the goal of increasing the value of our agricultural products. It's something that we all can support and get behind. And you know, I think it's taken various forms over the years.

Part of my concern, though, rests with how this is going to look to investors when, you know, they're looking to ensure that when they make these kinds of investments that they're doing it with a view towards environmental and social governance objectives. And when we have a premier who talks about not caring about the state of our climate policy here in the province, it doesn't really provide much of an incentive to attract that sort of investment or the workers, I would also suggest, that we're going to need to attract and work in these sectors of our economy. That is, we're seen going in the wrong direction right now.

And so while I applaud opportunities to incentivize value-added agriculture, I think that we need to make sure that we're working on all fronts to ensure a sustainable way forward, one that's considering all aspects of our economy that are moving forward in a sustainable way. I would look for some objective evidence that supports those initiatives here in the province. I know that the critic for this area will have much more to say on this matter. But with that, I will adjourn debate on Bill No. 82.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 83

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 83 — *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from

Saskatoon University.

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to . . . I don't know if it's good to weigh in on this debate, but I'm weighing in on adjourned debate on Bill 83, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2022*. This bill serves to implement the government's budget announcement of a tobacco tax rate hike of 2 cents per cigarette, along with an 8-cent increase for smokeless tobacco and an 8-cent-per-gram increase for roll-your-own tobacco. It's expected with this tax increase on tobacco that the government will generate revenue of around \$12.1 million per year.

This bill also includes a number of housekeeping amendments, Mr. Speaker. And I was joking earlier about whether it's good or not to weigh in, Mr. Speaker, as I am a tobacco user myself. And so I can't pretend I'm overly thrilled about this bill on a personal level; however, on a policy level, I'll try to be a bit more objective.

It has been demonstrated that the impact of public health taxes on potentially harmful goods does in fact lead to decreases in consumption. These taxes can also be used to generate revenue for health services, and simulated improvements in population health have also been shown by way of research.

What I do think would be far better though, Mr. Speaker, is for this government to adopt what is referred to as an upstream approach in the way that they govern. In this instance, sinking revenue into prevention would be ideal, and I would suggest that this government use both the existing and additional revenue that will be soon generated from these so-called sin taxes, will be funnelled directly into evidence-based preventative measures.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 83, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2022*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 84

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 84** — *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2022* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To just quickly make some comments here. I know we have committees and some more work to do. I just wanted to quickly join in and make a few comments. I know there will be more opportunity of my colleagues in committee work that will be done when this bill goes to committee.

But you know, provincial sales tax, and here's a government . . . Back home the riding of Athabasca, Cumberland, northern ridings that I represent, we were hoping to see supports. People

needed a break. They needed an opportunity to have a break. Instead what did the new MLA for Athabasca do? What he brought home? Thirty-two new fees and taxes for the good people of the Athabasca and northern Saskatchewan, the Cumberland riding. People back home, remember this: you were brought more taxes.

So unfortunately, you know, here's a situation that northern people are struggling with: affordability, making ends meet. And we're hope to see, you know, an opportunity, some relief with costs — the power bills, food, everything, everything, fuel — they've seen. We've asked for help and unfortunately the good people of Cumberland and the North will not be getting the help.

Instead you're going to be getting more tax fees. That's what they're bringing to you. Thirty-two new fees and taxes to the good people of the North who are struggling to make ends meet, feed their family. That's a pretty sad thing to have to say, but that's the way it is. And I hope people remember this and have contacted me and are not happy about this.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's going to be more to say, and we're going to have opportunities to talk more about that, you know, in days to come. And my colleagues will be talking more about that. So at this point I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill No. 84, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2022*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thanks very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committees this afternoon and this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved that the Assembly do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:15.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

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

Hon. Fred Bradshaw
Minister of Highways
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Social Services

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Education

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Energy and Resources

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

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

Hon. Everett Hindley
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,
Seniors and Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Warren Kaeding
Minister of Environment

Hon. Gene Makowsky
Minister of Advanced Education

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

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

Hon. Paul Merriman
Minister of Health

Hon. Don Morgan
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
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Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for the
Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board

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

Hon. Laura Ross
Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety

Hon. Gordon Wyant
Minister of Justice and Attorney General