



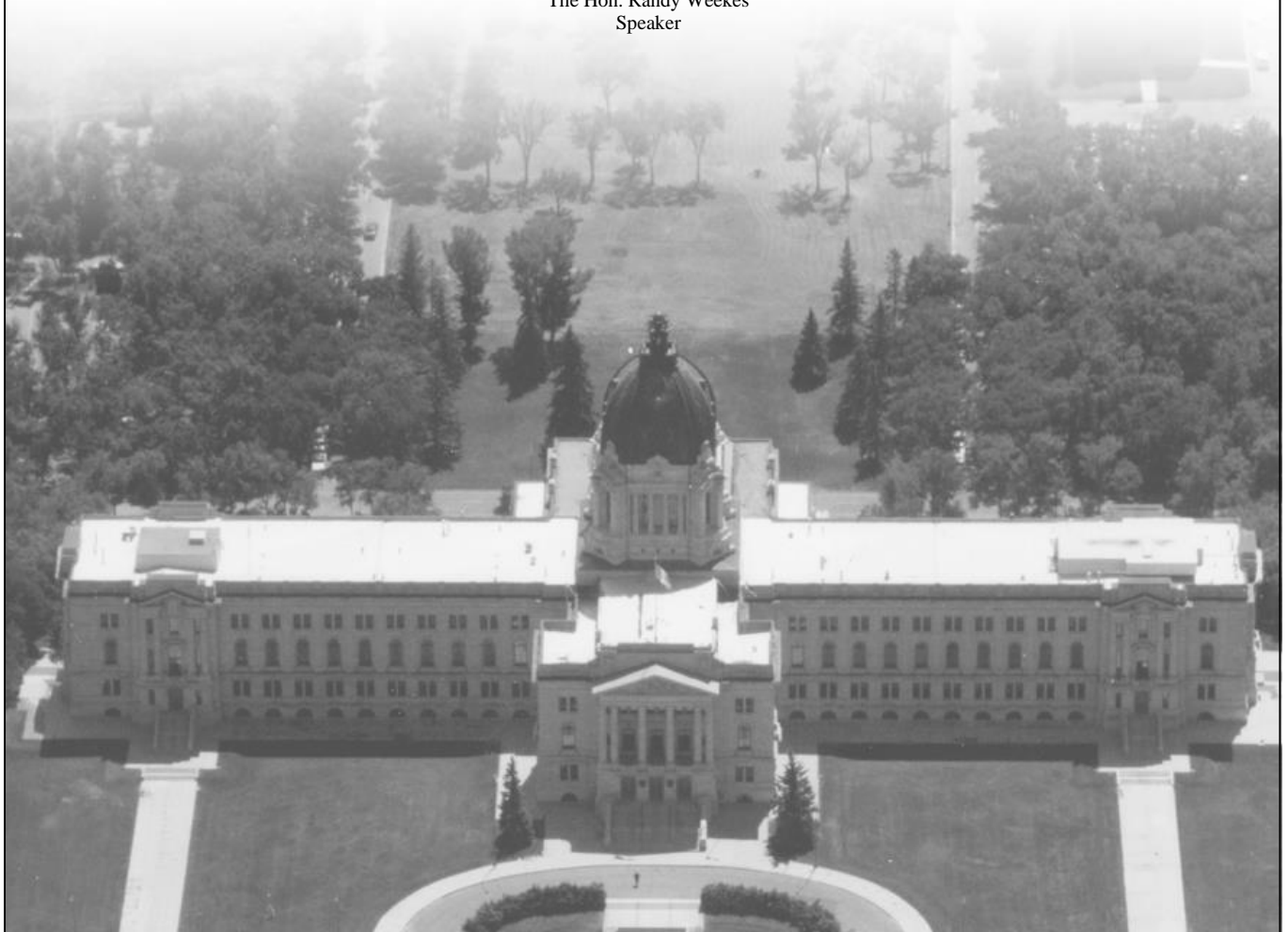
SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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)
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Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)	Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)	Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
Kaeding, Hon. Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)	Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP)	

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

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

Deputy Clerk — Iris Lang

Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyak

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are joined in the west gallery today, Mr. Speaker, by 18 medical students from the University of Saskatchewan's College of Medicine. They're led today by Ava Bayat, a second-year medical student who heads the government affairs and advocacy committee. Each year, Mr. Speaker, this committee of medical students researches a health-related policy and sets a date for a provincial day of action, as well as a meeting with both ministers of Health.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome these 18 medical students to their Legislative Assembly, and I look forward to meeting with the group later today after question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to rise and join the minister in welcoming the students from the College of Medicine. Great to see some future colleagues and students of my alma mater, and just what admiration I have for the work that this group does in advocacy. Over the years we've seen these lobby days become more professional, more successful.

And I certainly hope that the efforts that these folks are making on behalf of harm reduction, on behalf of those who are struggling with mental health and addictions in our province, that they bear fruit. And I certainly hope that these students will continue to be strong advocates during their training and into their practice. Thanks so much for being here. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them.

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

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to, in the west gallery, introduce 20 students from the Northstar School in Sturgis, in the west gallery there. And I'm going to meet with them after. I even have some ice cream for you kids. So I look forward to meeting with you after question period. And I'd like everybody to welcome them. Thank you.

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sitting in the west gallery I've also got a school group — and I'm certainly hoping that they're going to get some ice cream as well — 24 grade 8 students from Harvest City Christian Academy. Give us all a wave. And they're accompanied by their teacher Tara Yemba. And I'm looking forward to getting stumped by their questions. I'd ask all members to help me welcome them to their 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, folks from the . . . as it relates to Highway 9 in the northeast of the province, Mr. Speaker. And it relates to the highway between Preeceville and Hudson Bay, which is in horrible condition as described by petitioners, Mr. Speaker. It's not safe, as they described, and they've been calling on this government to work with municipalities and with those in the area to address the unsafe, inadequate conditions on Highway 9.

The prayer reads as follows, that they:

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.

These petitions today are signed by good folks from Weekes, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of concerned residents of Saskatchewan regarding the SIS [Saskatchewan income support] program. The signatories of this petition wish to bring to this legislature's attention that unlike its predecessors, the new SIS program does not directly pay for housing and utilities. It does not cover any amassed arrears, Mr. Speaker. And the program, as we know, as we hear about almost on a daily basis, has resulted in increased evictions and homelessness across the province. And there is not a single community in this province, Mr. Speaker, that has not been impacted by the cruel consequences of this SIS program.

So with that, I will 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 restore direct payment of rent and utilities for income support clients.

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

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly calling for home supports for older adults in Saskatchewan. The thing that I want to highlight today with this petition is, as the prayer reads, calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to work with older adults, to work with stakeholders, and to work with municipalities. And this requires co-operation, but it also requires envisioning the type of province that we want for all of us, for our loved ones, as

we age, as we grow old, in particular as we come out of the pandemic. And that's going to require listening to older adults and what they want those years to look like.

What they're asking us for here in this petition is to have supports at home that go beyond traditional home care, that go beyond health care needs and help fulfill needs related to practical lifestyle needs to ensure that older adults can age in their homes, in their communities, surrounded by loved ones, and that that has a major benefit in terms of quality of life for older adults.

I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

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 Loon Lake. I do so present.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for an independent inquiry into the Sask Party government's handling of the pandemic. These citizens wish to bring to our attention that modelling in June of 2021 predicted the deadly fourth wave and went ignored; and that government rushed to remove restrictions, missing their own immunization target; that the offer of federal aid went unanswered until the province had to transfer ICU [intensive care unit] patients to Ontario; that the refusal to follow SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] back-to-school recommendations led to an offloading of responsibilities to school divisions; that the comments the Premier made regarding the effectiveness of vaccines against the Omicron variant has led to the spread of misinformation; that the government refused to release the full recommendations provided by Saskatchewan's chief medical health officer; and that the total number of COVID-19 deaths is not fully known due to lagging reporting and an increase in excess deaths.

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 commit to a full independent public inquiry into the Government of Saskatchewan's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is signed by individuals from Saskatoon and Qu'Appelle, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week runs April 24th to the 30th.

This is to raise awareness of the critical need of donors across Canada. This also encourages us to register our intentions and express our wishes to loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, 15 years ago today, I sat with my father in an Edmonton hospital after receiving such a gift, a selfless act that someone or their family had made in quite possibly the hardest time in their lives. It provided an unbelievable gift to my family.

While we have always been firm believers in organ donation, it really hits home when you experience the benefits directly, Mr. Speaker. My daughters, nieces, and nephews were able to enjoy every aspect of their childhood with their grandpa, something that was not going to happen without this gift. Mr. Speaker, I was able to witness my children doing all the things I did with my dad growing up — riding horses, working cattle, farming. There wasn't a time that dad didn't have a girl on his hip at the farm.

So during this week, Mr. Speaker, and every week, I urge you and all members to please register to be a donor. It literally will save a life and change many others for the better, like my family's.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Award-Winning Saskatoon Artist Continues to Inspire

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to highlight one of the many amazing visual artists who call Eastview home. Ruth Cuthand intertwines themes of settler-Indigenous relations through contemporary and traditional Indigenous art forms, especially beadwork. Ruth is the winner of many accolades in the art world. Most recently, in 2020 she received the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts in Ottawa.

Now during the early stages of the COVID pandemic, Ruth spent a time, like many of us, in isolation. But Ruth got to work with glass beads and PPE [personal protective equipment]. She used medical-grade N95 masks and beaded depictions of the COVID-19 virus. She also sold prints of her COVID-19 beadwork to raise money for Prairie Harm Reduction. And I was fortunate to receive one of these prints as a very thoughtful gift from my wife.

Ruth also created two collaborative works of public art in Saskatoon in 2021, including a sculpture at 20th Street and Avenue B that depicts the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the buffalo. And another at Broadway and Main that fuses the cultural art forms of the two artists with Cree-Michif beadwork and East African henna.

Ruth continues to be a force for reconciliation through the arts today. I want to say thank you to Ruth for making Eastview her community, and I invite all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating her on her many achievements and for using her gifts to educate, agitate, and inspire change.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

Remembering Jim Carriere

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently we lost a good friend to K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education in the province, and in particular Catholic education. I lost a constituent, a former colleague, and a personal friend. The Catholic schools community mourns the loss of long-term trustee Jim Carriere, who passed away suddenly on April 4th.

Jim was first elected to the Greater Saskatoon Board of Education in 1997. During Jim's 25 years, he served nine years as board Chair. Mr. Speaker, I served with Jim as a trustee for 13 years prior to being elected as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. Jim worked for SaskTel for 35 years. After retirement, he turned his side job doing home renos into a full-time business. I was a benefactor of this, Mr. Speaker, when he was hired to complete renovations in my home.

I would like to quote Diane Boyko, current Chair of GSCS [Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools]:

His voice of reason and his ability to ask the difficult questions around the board table will be missed just as much as his passion for Catholic education and the families he felt privileged to serve.

Jim is survived by Susan, his wife of 48 years; four children; and four grandchildren. His obituary noted that Jim and Susan were best friends and were the epitome of true love. His funeral card included this verse:

A limb has fallen from the family tree
that says, "Grieve not for me.
Remember the best times, the laughter, the song,
the good life I lived while I was strong."

Rest in peace, my friend.

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

National Immunization Awareness Week

Ms. Mowat: — I rise today to recognize National Immunization Awareness Week. The importance of immunization has been highlighted over the past two years as the entire world has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet vaccines have played an important role in health care for many decades now. A year ago it would have been hard to believe that first, second, and booster vaccines for coronavirus would be available to anyone who wants them.

Sadly, in Saskatchewan our vaccine uptake is some of the lowest in Canada, and our record-breaking hospitalizations at present reflect that. It's estimated that immunization prevents 2 to 3 million deaths every year, making it one of the most successful and cost-effective health interventions ever developed.

[13:45]

Vaccines and immunization have prevented millions of deaths from diseases such as polio, measles, rubella, and of course, COVID-19. Society has greatly benefited from the incredible

work of scientists and health professionals who have dedicated their lives to eradicating deadly illnesses.

Saskatchewan is fortunate enough to be the home to VIDO-InterVac [Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization-international vaccine centre] located in Saskatoon, a world leader in developing vaccines and technologies against infectious disease. It is crucial that we as legislators support scientific research and provide the necessary resources to ensure that vaccines are readily available to everyone in Saskatchewan.

I ask that all members join me in recognizing National Immunization Awareness Week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Legislation to Address Human Trafficking

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to announce that *The Protection From Human Trafficking Act* is now in force. Human trafficking is a horrific crime that has been growing at an alarming rate across Canada. Reports from women of attempted trafficking have increased in major centres like Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Regina. While law enforcement focus on preventing these trafficking attempts in Saskatchewan, many survivors still need support for protection and justice. That is why this government's new legislation takes a victim-centred approach.

With this legislation, community-based organizations and law services receive extra tools to assist victims of human trafficking in Saskatchewan, such as the ability to seek search warrants for residences or vehicles to locate a victim and remove them from the premises for safety reasons. This government wants to make it impossible for offenders to get away with their crimes by putting more penalties on traffickers and adding new protection for victims. The legislation also further aligns us with existing laws in Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, this government takes the safety of residents seriously, which is why we will continue to approach the issue of human trafficking by helping victims feel safe and traffickers feel scared. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Royal Saskatchewan Museum Opens New Exhibit

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan we have so much to be proud of, and especially when it comes to our tourist attractions and destinations. I'm pleased to rise today to highlight one new attraction that just opened in Regina. On April 22nd, the Royal Saskatchewan Museum opened the new gallery, Home: Life in the Anthropocene.

Mr. Speaker, this new exhibit highlights the relationship between people and our environment as well as the benefits that nature provides. Now the Home gallery provides a wonderful educational experience for all ages. I learned a ton when I was there. My kids thought it was outstanding. They learned about climate, biodiversity, species at risk, and other global trends.

Mr. Speaker, this new gallery not only adds another incredible attraction to our province, it reaffirms the Royal Saskatchewan Museum as one of the top provincial attractions.

It's also a chance to highlight the excellent work that the RSM [Royal Saskatchewan Museum] staff is doing, and also a chance to thank the Friends of the Royal Saskatchewan Museum for their work in organizing the Home gala event on April 21st. That event featured science commentator Jay Ingram and Louise Bernice Halfe, Sky Dancer, Canada's parliamentary poet laureate.

A non-profit charitable organization, the Friends supports educational opportunities and services, including funding programs, scientific research, and exhibits such as the new Home gallery. I would encourage all members to get out to the Royal Sask Museum and check it out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Habitat for Humanity Completes Housing Project in Regina

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning we celebrated the completion of the Haultain Crossing housing project here in Regina. I was joined by my colleagues the Minister of Social Services and the member for Regina Walsh Acres. Habitat for Humanity built an incredible 62 units at Haultain Crossing, and families who were in need now call these units home. This morning marked the completion of the final phase of the project, and we presented 17 families with the keys to their new home.

Mr. Speaker, having a home and putting down roots is among the first steps we take in making our future goals a reality. That is why the Government of Saskatchewan is committed to providing safe and affordable housing for those in need. Our incredible partners at Habitat for Humanity help us follow through on this commitment.

Mr. Speaker, since 2009 our government has invested more than \$12 million to help Habitat house Saskatchewan families. This has created 206 new housing units in 14 different communities across the province. I look forward to our continued partnership as we work to connect more Saskatchewan families in need to safe, stable housing.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Habitat on the completion of the Haultain Crossing project, as well as all the families who can now proudly call themselves homeowners. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Premier's Comments

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier said recently that he doesn't care about climate change. The biggest threat to global health in this century, and he just doesn't care. Now that doesn't come as much of a surprise. This government's record is clear. They don't believe in the science. They don't care about the future.

But those words, "I don't care," just sums up so much of the attitude of this Premier. For example, skyrocketing inflation driving up prices for essentials like food and fuel, the Premier, he dismisses this as oh, just a few extra cents for gas, Mr. Speaker. Instead of bringing price relief, he's making things harder for families that are already struggling, with 32 new taxes and fee hikes. People are hurting, and the Premier of the province doesn't care, doesn't care that they're hurting.

What kind of leader makes life harder when people are already struggling?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as I listened to, you know, a number . . . much of the preamble to that question, many of those statements are just not factual, Mr. Speaker, with respect to, in particular with respect to the context at which those original comments were made. The fact of the matter is, is in this province, this province . . . The investments that have been made in this province by, for example, the potash industry or the agriculture industry, are putting our province in a place where we are producing some of the cleanest products that you can purchase anywhere in the world, Mr. Speaker.

And what we would put forward to those that are purchasing agri-food products, potash products, uranium — copper in the future, a net zero copper mine on the proposal list here in this province — we would put forward that you should buy more of those products from Saskatchewan. Not only because they're the highest quality, not only because they're affordable, Mr. Speaker, but because they're the cleanest products that you can find anywhere in the world.

Mr. Speaker, that is going to continue to attract investment, but provide opportunity for Saskatchewan people to gain employment and to climb in their careers throughout the time that they are here. We've seen tens of thousands of people move here for a better life, bring their family here for a better life. And we're intent on continuing, Mr. Speaker, those opportunities into the years ahead.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. "I don't care." That's what the Premier said about climate change, and it's what his attitude shows about so much that Saskatchewan people are facing right now.

More people have died from COVID-19 this year than by this same point in 2021. The highest death rate in the entire country is among Saskatchewan people. Thousands are getting sick, missing work, missing school, facing potential long-term complications. And every day, multiple Saskatchewan families are saying goodbye forever to someone who is dying from a preventable illness, Mr. Speaker.

And what does the Premier have to say about it? Nothing at all. Not a word of condolence, not a word of concern about how badly things have gone, how badly things are going under his watch. People are dying, and the Premier doesn't care.

When did the Premier decide that the health of Saskatchewan

people just wasn't his problem?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, time after time after time in the preamble to that question we see the Leader of the Opposition misportraying the words that were spoken by me, and taking those into many other contexts. When the Leader of the Opposition is going to get up and ask a legitimate question in this House, I'll get up and answer it.

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

Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. "I don't care." Those were the Premier's words and his attitude that he demonstrates every day in response to things that are truly important in the lives of Saskatchewan people. Four hundred and seventeen of those Saskatchewan people are in hospital right now with COVID-19. It's the highest number throughout the pandemic. It's almost as high as in British Columbia, which has four times our population, and it's wreaking havoc in our health system and in our emergency room.

And the worst part of it is, Mr. Speaker, the Premier knew it would happen. He had the modelling that made clear that's the road we would go down, and still he chose to remove all public health protections. Once again, as he's done so many times throughout this pandemic, he's ignored the science in favour of a cheap political win.

Why does the Premier not care what happens in our hospitals? Why does he think that his political fortunes are so much more important than the lives of the people he was elected to serve?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I can report that there are about 150 to 160 individuals that have come into our hospital system that are presenting with COVID-19. Those individuals are being cared for by our front-line health care workers, and I can't thank them enough for that, Mr. Speaker.

But what we have been doing, which the Leader of the Opposition hasn't addressed, Mr. Speaker, is we've been listening to Dr. Shahab and our chief medical health officer throughout this. And I'll just give you a quote that Dr. Shahab said just not too long ago in the media. He said, "... at the same time, I think as individuals and communities, COVID can't be the overriding thing, influencing everything."

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We have 19 million rapid tests out there. We have vaccinations readily available. The rapid tests are at 600 locations across the province. We have the ability to be able to make sure that we can manage COVID in our community.

Is COVID in our community? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. But you know what? The people of Saskatchewan have the tools and the techniques to be able to help manage it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, "I don't care." There you see it again. That same attitude that the Premier reflects is displayed when this minister downplays the seriousness of the disaster of his management of COVID-19. And he too saw it coming. He too knew we needed more help.

In 2019 we released an SHA memo that showed that Regina had fewer emergency room doctors per capita than Saskatoon. The memo highlighted that Regina ER [emergency room] wait times were the highest of any major centre and that the 31 ER doc positions were nowhere near enough to meet demand.

Can the Premier tell us what has changed since this government promised to look into the shortage? Exactly how many more doctors are now working in Regina ERs, or has his government not cared enough to find out?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And maybe the member opposite wasn't paying attention, but how we're addressing what's happening in our health care system, as well as with other ministries, is the budget that we just brought into this House that they voted against. And I have to keep reminding that, Mr. Speaker — the increase of 11 ICUs, the increase of 10 high-acuity beds here in Regina.

Also, Mr. Speaker, we do have some human resource challenges. Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. But that's why we have our four-point plan to be able to do this. We're going to recruit across Canada. We're going to go recruit in the Philippines. We also are going to train people. We have 150 extra nursing seats. That's almost 1,000 nursing seats that we have in this province.

We're going to incentivize individuals not just to work in our cities but work in our rural and remote and northern communities. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to make sure that we have the supports in there to retain those individuals so that they can do the services that the Saskatchewan people expect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, what an incredibly empty answer because the response to the issue in emergency rooms has been empty as well. Not a single new doctor added since 2019, and ERs in Regina are even more overwhelmed than they were then — not one more doc.

Staff is regularly having to make desperate calls for extra help because the situation isn't safe, and too often that help doesn't come. ER doctors in Regina call it a situation which is "where our ability to care for people is compromised." They add, "We don't have the capacity to care for emergencies anymore."

That 2019 memo said that to even meet the same level of care as Saskatoon, which has its own serious staffing pressures, you need 37 positions, six more docs. Instead we see zero. Why, with full knowledge of the staffing shortages, with the added needs of a pandemic, has this government done nothing to address the problems in Regina ERs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, I'll go through some of the budget items that obviously the member opposite didn't look at with the 2022-23 budget: 1.3 million to add four family medicine training seats to southeast Saskatchewan; 504,000 to expand Saskatchewan's international physician practice assessment seats; rural incentive programs for \$600,000; \$606,000 for physician support in rural Saskatchewan. This is what we are doing to make sure that the people of Saskatchewan have the services when they need it, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

But I . . . curious as to why they have no solutions. All they say is just do more and more and more. When we try to add more into their budgets, what do they do? They vote against it again and again, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan to be able to restore our health care system to what the people of Saskatchewan expect, and I would hope those members opposite would certainly support that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Doctors in Saskatchewan in the news saying that they can't care for emergencies anymore. And the Premier doesn't care. The minister doesn't care. They just want to downplay it. Beds set up in the waiting room in St. Paul's. Calls for help from Regina Pasqua. And the minister, what does he do? He dismisses this as seasonal pressures. Well he's dead wrong. And if he had the curiosity and courage to go find out for himself from the front-line workers, he'd know that.

I've been to those ERs. I've spoken to the nurses and docs. I've heard the fear in their voices. I've seen those packed waiting rooms. The minister, he thinks it's beneath him to show up. He refuses to go and see for himself. Will the Premier show the courage that his minister so clearly lacks? Will he go see the reality in our ERs? Or does he just not care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — There seems to be a lot of assumptions over there by the opposition, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you this: I certainly do care. I meet with patients. Our members over here meet with patients. We continue to talk to the people in the health care system, whether they're our neighbours or whether we're seeing them in person in the clinical setting, Mr. Speaker.

It is absolutely ridiculous that that member over there says that we don't care. We do, Mr. Speaker. We continue to care. That's why we invested in the budget. That's why we're investing in urgent care centres. That's why we're investing in our physicians, our nurses, our clinicians all across this province. We're recruiting around the world. The only thing that doesn't care, Mr. Speaker, is that member over there doesn't care about anything that we are doing to be able to improve things here in Saskatchewan.

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

Inflationary Pressures and Affordability

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's talk about

improving things in Saskatchewan. Right now, Canada has the highest inflation rate since 1991. And now this won't be a surprise to anyone who's gone out to buy groceries, fill up a tank of gas, or is running a small business facing increasing prices. Higher prices, not a surprise, but what continues to be absolutely astonishing is this government's response to this affordability crisis.

What do they do? They slap 32 taxes and fees; they hike power rates; they increase property taxes. They might not like to hear it, but they've added 32 taxes and fees in this budget. We hear it daily; I know members opposite do. So other governments, Mr. Speaker, other governments are taking plans and are enacting affordability measures. Why won't this one?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that there are inflationary pressures in our province, in our country, and around the world right now for a number of circumstances, obviously for the geopolitical circumstance that is being experienced in Europe, as well as aftermath of COVID.

Now the members opposite asked for us to take a look at the fuel tax, Mr. Speaker, and whether or not we would do what Alberta did. Well I'd just like to say that Alberta is taking off their fuel tax for three months, and if you consumed 150 litres per month your savings per driver is \$58.50. Ontario also did a reduction of their fuel tax, and if you consume 150 litres a month for their six months of reduction, you would save \$51.30.

Mr. Speaker, our \$100 SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] rebate is more than either one of those measures.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The same old tired lines from the same old tired government. Inflation here in Saskatchewan is at 5.7 per cent. And we're not just talking about 50 bucks for additional costs for a tank of gas, which — guess what? — matters to families. Some folks can't fill up their tank of gas. They're putting 5, 10, 15 bucks in their car because that's all they can afford.

Inflation pressures are hurting people in this province. Producers are pinched by rising input costs. Organizations like the Saskatchewan Friendship Inn, who feed people who can't otherwise feed themselves, are finding it harder to do so with skyrocketing food prices. Schools, school divisions that drive not just a few hundred kilometres a month but 30 000 kilometres a day in some cases, aren't being given an extra dime by this government to pay for increasing fuel costs.

This is a government sitting on record revenues, revenues that belong to the people of this province. Will you today, will this government today commit to real affordability measures?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite didn't really focus on any particular thing. She spoke to the education budget which was increased this year in the budget.

She spoke to measures for community-based organizations which all seen a 2 per cent increase in this budget, Mr. Speaker. It follows a number of increases over previous years.

And individuals, Mr. Speaker, I've spoken at length before to all of the affordable measures that this government has done each and every year, which is realized each and every year, including a large reduction to personal income tax and a number of tax credits for those of low income. There's an increase for seniors again this year, for the low-income seniors, Mr. Speaker. And so I've spoken to all of those measures which add up to forgone revenue or direct payments to a total of over \$2 billion.

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

Funding for Education

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, earlier this month Prairie Valley joined a growing list of school divisions warning parents to brace for funding cuts. They sent a letter — and I'll read — just like many other school divisions sent a letter. I'll quote theirs: "As we told the Minister of Education during a meeting on March 24th, 2022, funding increases well below the rate of inflation have created a situation which is not sustainable."

So either that minister isn't listening or he doesn't care. Maybe he doesn't care about \$152,000 in increased utility costs for Prairie Valley, \$250,000 more for fuel, and not a single buck from the Sask Party to offset these additional costs.

The minister has already acknowledged that rising inflation is a problem for our schools. Will he commit to fixing it today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've had an opportunity to meet with Prairie Valley School Division board after . . . I believe it was after the budget had been presented, Mr. Speaker. Obviously they have two additional months to present a budget to myself in order for me to sign off on that. I look forward to seeing that budget at the end of June and approving a budget that they put forward, Mr. Speaker.

I would note for the record, Prairie Valley School Division is slated to see a 2 per cent increase in funding, Mr. Speaker. That works out to nearly \$2 million. Their enrolment is slated to be up about 60 students, but they will receive additional money this year. And again I look forward to seeing what their budget looks like when they present it. Thank you.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, the problem doesn't stop at rising gas costs. The minister knows that there's other costs hitting our school divisions. Prairie Valley School Division says that no additional funding has been provided for social workers, addictions counsellors, and psychologists. At the same time, like the minister noted, the number of students is increasing and the number of students per educator is also going to grow.

More students, not enough staff. The math just doesn't add up.

Does the minister honestly think that Saskatchewan kids, with everything that they've been through in the last two years, should be entering schools next fall with fewer supports there to help them out?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well there will be additional supports for students on top of the \$23 million that's provided to pay for the 2 per cent increase in the teachers' collective bargaining agreement. There is \$6 million in supports for learning. There's \$7 million available to school divisions for additional EAs [educational assistant], 200 EA positions that will be funded. School divisions have the ability to apply for those dollars should they choose to accept that, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would note Prairie Valley did indicate, based on preliminary work with their budget that their overall pupil/teacher ratio for this upcoming year will go from 15.5 to 16, a 0.5 increase in that ratio. But again it's early days. I know school divisions are just meeting now, looking preliminarily at their budget, looking to see how many teachers are going to be retiring, how many will be replaced by teachers at the lower end of the grid, new teachers, Mr. Speaker. Lots of work that needs to be done in terms of school divisions developing their budgets.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would note that they do have \$1.99 billion, a record amount for education in this province. And I look forward to seeing what they deliver in the upcoming school year. Thank you.

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

Harm Reduction Initiatives and Safe Consumption Sites

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, it's no secret that this province is in a mental health and addictions crisis. But despite this, the amount of health budget this government is dedicating to mental health and addictions is actually going down, moving us backwards instead of catching up with the national average. Last year we had the highest number of overdose deaths ever seen in this province, up 110 per cent from four years ago. Tragically this year we're on track to break that record.

The Student Medical Society of Saskatchewan is here again in the Assembly today to ask for a commitment from this government to fund safe consumption sites and save lives. Will the minister commit to that today?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the medical students for being here today. I look forward to the conversation and the meeting we're going to have later this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget we are funding another record investment into mental health and addictions in Saskatchewan. In the 2022-23 budget, we will spend \$67 million on addictions services and supports, an 81 per cent increase in this area since 2007, Mr. Speaker.

The government is focused on prevention but also harm reduction on the path to treatment and recovery, Mr. Speaker, making sure that we provide these supports to as many people as broadly across the province as we can, knowing that there are communities and families struggling with addictions issues all across Saskatchewan. So it is our goal to try to focus those dollars as broadly as we can to people across the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, if they cared about this problem they would follow the evidence. This government knows that harm reduction saves lives, yet they actively choose not to fund it. Not only do these programs save lives, but they save costs to our already overburdened health care system. Saskatchewan sees some of the highest rates of hospitalizations due to drug toxicity in the nation. We spend countless dollars on reactive care.

Knowing that safe consumption sites save lives and save health system dollars, can this minister give us one good reason why they aren't funding safe consumption sites?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And just to be clear, the government does fund harm reduction. Mr. Speaker, we are investing \$3.8 million in this year's budget into harm reduction across this province, over nine times the amount spent on harm reduction since 2007. We're investing in a number of areas, trying to make sure that we provide these supports and services as broadly as we can to people across this province.

We know, according to the statistics that 75 per cent of the suspected overdoses that EMS [emergency medical services] respond to occur in a residence. It's why we're investing in enhancing the take-home naloxone program as an example, Mr. Speaker, the free take-home naloxone program which is available in 76 communities and 226 locations. We're going to be expanding that with additional funds in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker.

We're enhancing and expanding the drug checking strip program which was launched as a pilot back in the summer, Mr. Speaker, and was expanded to a number of other communities across this province in the fall. We're investing in spectrometer machines, Mr. Speaker, which will soon be operational in this province, again with the goal that we try to provide these supports to as many people as we can regardless of where they live in Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, he didn't answer the question. Can he give us one good reason why this government will not fund safe consumption sites?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my previous answer, we know that there are communities and families all across Saskatchewan that are struggling with overdoses and with the addictions challenge that is impacting this province, Mr. Speaker, and provinces and territories across this nation.

Mr. Speaker, we are trying to make sure that we invest these dollars as best we can so that they can reach as many people across Saskatchewan when it comes to providing support for addictions and treatment support. And we're going to continue to do that. We're investing in more treatment spaces, additional funding in this year's budget, as part of our commitment to add 150 treatment spaces across this province when it comes to treatment, the detox for people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We're also going to ensure that we continue to invest in harm reduction initiatives, a variety of harm reduction initiatives across this province, Mr. Speaker, in a variety of communities all across Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

[14:15]

Suicide Prevention Strategy

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, this is the 10th day this spring I rise on behalf of Saskatchewan families, today the Cook 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 provincial government, I extend my deepest sympathies to the Cook family.

Mr. Speaker, in 2020 in May, approximately two years ago, the government introduced the Pillars for Life suicide prevention strategy. As part of that are a number of programs and services that are part of that strategy, including the Roots of Hope initiative which has been developed and endorsed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada. And we continue to engage with and consult with community leaders and people across this province as we look to enhance these supports and services in regards to suicide prevention. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to questions 29 through 31.

The Speaker: — Questions 29 through 31 have been tabled.

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 Regina University.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's always a privilege to rise and weigh in on pieces of legislation before this Assembly. But of course it's not a pleasure to be speaking to Bill 70 here today because of course, Mr. Speaker, members on this side have been quite clear this is a piece of legislation that should have been pulled from the order paper.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I think today in my remarks I'd like to focus on something that the minister said a number of times in some of her enthusiastic and varied comments on Bill 70, and that is that times are changing; things are different. Somehow we as politicians in this legislature are different. Times are changing, Mr. Speaker. And now we know this is not true, Mr. Speaker.

Myself and several of my colleagues have canvassed the history of violence in legislatures in Canada and in other parliamentary jurisdictions in Canada. And what is evident, Mr. Speaker, is that with each and every horrific act of violence against governments, against legislators, is that attempts are made of course to strengthen security, and attempts are made to adjust and to learn from those terrible tragedies.

And we've canvassed in this Chamber this spring the bravery and the efforts of legislative security forces and Sergeant-at-Arms across Canada and other places in the Commonwealth, Mr. Speaker. And we know of the heroic efforts that have taken place in neighbouring provinces here.

And we know, Mr. Speaker, that in response to every one of those incidents, every one of those terrible tragedies — often those horrible, politically motivated murders in many cases — that those responsible for overseeing the safety of all members and all staff and all media have not elected to seize control. They have not elected to make their spaces less safe. In fact we've seen the opposite.

In every example canvassed, those jurisdictions have done the opposite of what this government is proposing to do. If anything, they have strengthened the independence and the role of their legislative security forces, of the Sergeant-at-Arms. And of course, Mr. Speaker, as has been discussed extensively, that is in fact the opposite of what Bill 70 does.

This is not a bill that makes any person in this building safer. This is not a bill that strengthens security processes in this building or in our constituency offices or for members in their communities.

This is in fact a bill that accomplishes the opposite of that. It places control in the hands of the government which is, as I said, contrary to other jurisdictions in Canada. And it really speaks to

how fundamentally out of touch and arrogant this piece of legislation is. To think that it's a good idea to maverick ideas around physical security and be the outlier within Canada is truly a remarkable level of confidence, Mr. Speaker.

So the minister has said, you know, it's necessary. We're largely unclear why it's necessary, Mr. Speaker. The minister can't seem to provide any specific examples, any reasons, any challenges that she or her members have had in addressing any concerns through the traditional mechanism, which is of course the Board of Internal Economy.

But she tells us times are changing and that we need to adapt, and we need to get with it. And now, Mr. Speaker, we know this isn't the case. We know this isn't the case. Many members in this Chamber are students of history. And many members will be familiar with the unfortunate history of violence that many jurisdictions have, certainly we're not immune to here in Canada.

But you only have to look south of the border and you look at some of the absolutely chaotic times that have happened in the United States with the assassination of Kennedy, Fred Hampton, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Robert Kennedy. Like all of these things happening within 10 years — historic levels of violence.

And this is not to say we should be happy or we should be complacent. But this is to say this is unfortunately an evergreen state of politics in the world. And you know, I'm sure all members hope that eventually we can live in a world without violence and without conflict. But for the minister to claim that something has shifted radically in, you know, the time between the last provincial election and the introduction of this bill is questionable at best. But the minister tells us times are changing and that we are special, and we in this building somehow have different needs that must be addressed through this partisan security force.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, just a casual look at the state of the province will tell any member in this building that that is simply not true. Unfortunately violence is present across this province and across workforces. We see this as a cause for lost workdays in our health care system. Our health care workers suffer huge levels of violence going to work each and every day, whether they're working in hospitals, primary care, seniors' care, continuing care aides. These are individuals — nurses, doctors, front-line workers in hospitals — who face true physical violence every day going to work. And we see this rising. Members in this Chamber know this. This has been well canvassed, well presented in the media.

Education. Seventy per cent of teachers and education workers in this province by the last . . . [inaudible] . . . report experiencing physical violence in the workplace — 70 per cent. And it's not just teachers, EAs, education workers who experience this, Mr. Speaker, but it's also students.

A national survey conducted in 2019 I believe — maybe 2020, I believe it's 2019 — canvassed students across Canada, looking at their experience of violence in school settings and in their classrooms. And tragically, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately Saskatchewan had the highest reported rates of students who experienced violence going to school — 44 per cent of students,

Mr. Speaker, K to 8 [kindergarten to grade 8]. These are elementary school students who are going to school, and nearly half of them experience or have experienced violence in a school setting.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we are not special. We are not different. Yes, we have an important and privileged job and role to play here in this province, Mr. Speaker, but health care workers, teachers, folks working in long-term care, doctors, receptionists, front-line workers in grocery stores, in liquor stores, in retail outlets across the province — these are individuals who face violence in their workplace unfortunately all too often, and in many cases, every day.

We in this building, Mr. Speaker, are not special. And while there is no place for violence in any workplace — real, emotional, psychological — it happens, and that has to be acknowledged. It is not specific to this building and it is not specific to the roles that we hold. And yes, we have special roles as elected members. And yes, we are served by incredible people in this building across all roles.

However, violence in workplace and in communities is all too prevalent in this province. And I wish, Mr. Speaker, that we were spending time, precious time in this Chamber — government resources, legislative resources — talking about some of those issues instead of talking about this piece of legislation that, as I said, should have been pulled from the order paper.

We see hate crimes in the province, crimes against everyday citizens just living their lives. They're not elected. They're not being asked to take controversial stances or to have the courage of their convictions publicly and outwardly, like I hope those members opposite will when it comes to Bill 70, but regular people living their lives in this province who maybe happen to be gay. Maybe they happen to be visibly trans. Maybe they're visibly Muslim. We've seen a tragic increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes in this province, and across the board hate crimes are increasing. Violence in this province is increasing and it is present in all workplaces, and it is unfortunately all too present in our communities.

We see this, Mr. Speaker, again with mental health and addictions. And we see this government focusing their attention, focusing their dollars, and focusing their backslapping on putting all of that money into law enforcement. And yes, there's a role for law enforcement in this province, Mr. Speaker, and an incredibly important one. But mental health and addictions in this province, we've seen this recently with some of the tragedies outlined in the news of late. Violence is prevalent in our communities, it is prevalent in our workplaces, and it is not something that we alone as politicians face.

You know, Mr. Speaker, on Bill 70 we've had little details. We've had little accountability. You know, some changing messages, but far too many of them just focus on telling us basically, sit down, shut up, times are changing, get with the program, we're going to innovate, we're going to be mavericks when it comes to legislative security in the Commonwealth.

And wow, Mr. Speaker, like what a heady level of confidence you have to have to think that you know best. You know better than law enforcement, you know better than decades of tradition,

and you know better than any other jurisdiction in Canada. But we've heard it from the minister time and time again: don't trust law enforcement, don't trust the record; trust us, trust the politicians.

But, Mr. Speaker, we can't when it comes to this bill, because this is a government that is throwing out a parliamentary custom, gutting the role of the Sergeant-at-Arms, making this building less safe for members, making this building less safe for staff, making this building less safe for the media, making this building less safe for the many people who come here every day as visitors, as validators, as support, as family.

You know, we've canvassed it already, but having the opportunity to speak to this bill again, I really want to drive this point home to the members opposite who are listening. If there are real concerns, if there are threats that have been brought against this building and to members in it, and you have not shared those with your colleagues for petty, sad, and low partisan reasons, shame on you.

[14:30]

Regardless of what happens — to the member from Cypress, who doesn't like that too much — I hope going forward you will share real concerns with your colleagues with whom you might not agree, but who still come to work every day in this building, many of whom bring their families, many of whom have to bring their children. And to think that you might not have done that is genuinely upsetting and concerning outside of a partisan context.

You know, we've canvassed a great deal of questions on Bill 70. My colleagues have done good work on this. But you know ultimately, Mr. Speaker, I'll go back to my original point. This is not a bill that makes any member safer. This is not a bill that increases accountability. This is not a bill that increases transparency. It does the opposite of that.

The minister has said again, times are changing, we're special, and we need to get with the program because, you know, somehow politicians should have more privileges and more protection than front-line workers across this province. And, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House believe that that is fundamentally untrue.

This is a minister who has been willing to take credit for times when the security forces in this building have kept us safe. Look at the attempted occupation of the legislature which, you know, you can smile about now, but being told that there's credible threats against your workplace is concerning and is unfortunate.

And, you know, while we have members of the government from the Premier on down unwilling to speak out against those blockades, against those protesters, we have people coming to this legislature not just to have their voices heard but to occupy and to intimidate and to threaten. And we have good work done by law enforcement in this city, across jurisdictions, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police].

We have great work done by the security in this building, the office of the Sergeant-at-Arms and successful, peaceful resolution with no damage to people or property or reputation or risk. That is something that should be celebrated and that is

something that should reinforce our belief in the pre-existing system and traditions of security in this building, not serve as an opportunity for the minister to pat herself on the back like, I don't know, somehow top-secret cabinet decisions are happening that lead to successful resolution. It's truly a wild piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, and it's one that I genuinely wish we weren't talking to.

Do the right thing. Listen to the people of the province. Listen to many of your own former members who have significant concerns about this. Listen to law enforcement. And pull this bill from the order paper. Spend your time, spend your resources, spend your political capital on things that will make this province better and safer for everyone in it, not some sad, petty exercise of control and vanity.

So that, Mr. Speaker, I will ask for leave to adjourn Bill 70. I will ask for leave to adjourn Bill 70.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Please adjourn.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I move to adjourn Bill 70.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn Bill 70. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 79

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter in briefly here this afternoon with respect to Bill No. 79, *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act, 2022*. I've reviewed the minister's comments on this front, Mr. Speaker, and you know, certainly the measure itself is well-intentioned in its described aims, Mr. Speaker. I think the question is, you know, some of the detail and design of this program, who's been involved in the design of it. Obviously on this front, Mr. Speaker, it's critical that Indigenous leaders, Indigenous people from across Saskatchewan are in the driver's seat on this front and in the design of this program to ensure that we don't get into a host of unintended consequences, Mr. Speaker.

It's important that we examine, you know, why the fund is being set up in the way that it is. I think that there's a valid question around who's going to control this and control of government or

non-Indigenous actors within it, Mr. Speaker, when I think we'd be well served to lean in and trust and work with Indigenous leaders in this province to be leading the way, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly as well, when you're building out a program like this with loan guarantees and there's choices being made around investments and proposals, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure I think that we get the best value for those dollars and bang for the buck, and that we're not setting this up in a way with, you know, costly administrative fees for some non-Indigenous actor within this, Mr. Speaker.

So these are important questions because I know the leadership, the Indigenous leadership in our province is very well positioned to lead the way and administer this fund. Certainly we see exceptional economic leadership from Indigenous peoples and First Nations and tribal councils across our province, Mr. Speaker. We see that all the time in small and local businesses that are growing and thriving, Mr. Speaker. We see that as well in larger enterprise. We see that on many different fronts.

I think of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council and the area First Nations, Mr. Speaker, and the incredible economic success that they've found. I think of folks like Flying Dust First Nation and all they've done, Mr. Speaker, in around heavy equipment training and road building and investment and assets that they're leveraging for their membership and for their people, Mr. Speaker, and job opportunities that they're extending. I see that as well in agriculture with Flying Dust and so many other folks, Mr. Speaker. We know of those exceptional assets, you know, that have been invested in and managed by Meadow Lake Tribal Council and the area First Nations with respect to forestry, Mr. Speaker.

And the same can be told right across the province. We know of the economic leadership out of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and the PAGC [Prince Albert Grand Council], Mr. Speaker, that have been real leaders with a lot of success in overcoming serious barriers in society to extend opportunities, hope to so many.

I think of Thomas Benjoe and the File Hills Qu'Appelle economic development group, Mr. Speaker, and all of their efforts, and all those good people that are connected to that work.

I think of Chief Delorme and Cowessess, Mr. Speaker, that have been leaders in so many ways, not least on the economic front, Mr. Speaker, pursuing sustainable, renewable power projects that extend affordable power but also jobs, as well as really firing up agriculture on those lands and building out trades and training capacity to extend job opportunities and prosperity to their members, Mr. Speaker.

So I think the question has to be — you know, the aims of this program are important; they're good — what is the design of the program? What's been the involvement of Indigenous people and leaders across our province, Mr. Speaker? What's their involvement in administering this program, Mr. Speaker? I would submit that they should be in the driver's seat, Mr. Speaker, with the most at stake in maximizing the value for this program.

We have questions as well as to why is the program limited to a couple sectors, Mr. Speaker. Why does it exclude other sectors,

Mr. Speaker, broader in scope — the tech sector, manufacturing, and more, Mr. Speaker? There's many strong economic opportunities that can be pursued by Indigenous people and business across Saskatchewan that we think should be considered within this program.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I know our critic has been fully engaged on this front. And I would invite Indigenous leaders and economic leaders and stakeholders from across Saskatchewan to engage with us. Our aim as the official opposition is to make sure that we have as effective of legislation as we can, a program that's going to maximize value, you know, on this front, and ensure that Indigenous leaders, Indigenous economic leaders, Indigenous people are leading the path on this front, Mr. Speaker. So with that being said, I will adjourn debate with respect to Bill No. 79.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 80

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to weigh in this afternoon, albeit briefly, on Bill No. 80, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker.

This bill, I've read the description and the aims of the minister, Mr. Speaker. I understand that this bill will bring a couple different assets and entities into one authority, and that being Innovation Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and that will now encompass SOCO [Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation], and that that oversight will be transferred as well from CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] then to Innovation Saskatchewan.

I think there's questions on this front around oversight and ensuring accountability for those assets, and ensuring that decisions are being able to be made with some accountability around them with our long-term interests in mind, Mr. Speaker. Certainly when we're talking about Innovation Sask and we're talking about SOCO and we're talking about those research parks and we're talking about all those different sectors and researchers and that ecosystem that's involved in this space, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about inspiring leaders and work within our province and business involvement in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I think of the tech sector itself, Mr. Speaker, and the kind of growth that it's demonstrated over the last number of years. This is about establishing new industry, new opportunity for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to commend all of the folks that are involved in this important work

as innovators in research, in the venture capital side of it, in the incubator side of it, in the mentorship side of it, Mr. Speaker, to allow Saskatchewan to grow on these fronts.

Certainly, you know, we have such tremendous opportunities being extended on this front that we need to ensure are captured from clean energy and technology, Mr. Speaker, through to our resource sector and value-add agriculture and manufacturing and so much more, Mr. Speaker.

So certainly we'll have questions to make sure we understand exactly the motivations as to these changes, to ensure that these changes are in the best interests of these very important sectors, Mr. Speaker, and of the people of Saskatchewan, to ensure that we understand the lines of accountability and transparency back to Saskatchewan people as well, Mr. Speaker.

Another important part when we're talking about innovation, Mr. Speaker, and of research that often doesn't get discussed much in this province by this government is intellectual property rights, Mr. Speaker, and intellectual property protection. Certainly when we're looking at the incredible research and innovation opportunities and the investment and deployment of public sector dollars as well, Mr. Speaker, we should really be mindful about making sure we're maximizing the return and the opportunity for Saskatchewan and Canada, Mr. Speaker.

I know there's been a critique that's been made by those with a lot of knowledge on these fronts that Canada itself, and that arguably Saskatchewan, doesn't have the kinds of intellectual property protection that we require to maximize the return on the investment that's being made into research and into innovation, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

And we should make sure that as we make investments in research and innovation, Mr. Speaker, that we maximize those returns for Saskatchewan people, extend that sort of opportunity. And I know there's other countries around the world who have acted on these fronts to make sure that they're maximizing that return on investment for the people of their jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker.

I would just close with saying that when we look at all of these new industries and new opportunities and then we think of the vast geography and incredible communities that are dispersed across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we really need to turn the dial on connectivity in Saskatchewan. The go-slow approach that we see from the current government just doesn't cut it in unlocking the kind of economic potential that exists for communities all across Saskatchewan.

And when I think of the communities that are really impacted by this, I think of those rural communities, Mr. Speaker. I think of those small towns and villages. I think of First Nations and Métis communities across Saskatchewan. I think of those in the North, Mr. Speaker. And we can invest in research and innovation, but if we don't have the infrastructure, the technology infrastructure to connect Saskatchewan, then we're failing to provide the full benefit that all regions, all communities, all people of the province deserve on these fronts, Mr. Speaker.

So the official opposition, the Saskatchewan New Democrats, will continue to push hard for the real investments. We've put proposals on the table to government that have been so far denied on this front. But we really feel that to unlock economic potential across Saskatchewan, making sure we're connected from a broadband perspective and from a cell phone perspective is really critical, Mr. Speaker. You know, it leaves a community, it leaves a person, leaves a family incredibly isolated.

We know that in 2022, Mr. Speaker, that connectivity isn't a luxury, Mr. Speaker. It's an essential service. And we're going to continue to push for our entire province to be connected, knowing that this is so important from a safety and security perspective, knowing that it's so important from a quality-of-life and well-being perspective, and knowing that it allows us to maximize economic returns and actually unlock economic potential in rural and northern and Indigenous communities across Saskatchewan. With that being said, I'll adjourn debate with respect to Bill No. 80.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 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 Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 81, *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act, 2022*. The opposition has long been pushing for action from this government for an expedited and fair process to recognize foreign credentials, Mr. Speaker. Too many newcomers come to Saskatchewan and struggle to be able to put their skills to application here in Saskatchewan. Of course the devils will be in the detail, Mr. Speaker, and our critic, or critics, given the overlap of many areas that this bill addresses, are sure to address that and ensure that the proper consultation has been done.

I will say though, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, this province is increasingly struggling with labour shortages that is partly due to a lack of workforce strategy . . . It's a very lively place in here, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite are working very hard for their salary increase that we recently saw, Mr. Speaker.

But yes, there are labour shortages across the province. It's so important to be seeking out initiatives to address this. The last thing we want to see is for Saskatchewan to become a trampoline province for newcomers. We want newcomers to be attracted to settling in Saskatchewan. Our economy needs them. Their presence not only improves our economy, it enriches our lives, Mr. Speaker. And certainly the transformation we've seen in increasing newcomers coming has been such a wonderful thing

to witness, Mr. Speaker, as someone that has grown up in Saskatchewan.

But we need to get this right, of course, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure that there's not a member in this House that does not hear from constituents on a regular basis who are here in limbo.

I think in particular of the many constituents in my riding, Mr. Speaker, who are trained as health care workers in their country of origin, came here during a pandemic, were very eager to put their skills to use. They were certainly needed. You know, we saw the Health minister get up on a daily basis talking about the labour shortages in that area. And yet we haven't seen swift action on this front, Mr. Speaker. So of course this is a new bill, and it's a welcome sight to see a bill that is attempting to address these issues, Mr. Speaker.

We are losing newcomers at a rate of, I think it's 7, only 7 out of 10 newcomers. And my colleague, the critic for Immigration, the member for Regina University, will correct me of course if I'm wrong. But we need to do better than that, Mr. Speaker. There's no reason that every single newcomer that starts to build a home in Saskatchewan doesn't see a future for themselves here. And of course this is a part of a larger pattern of concern from this government. We have some of the highest rates of out-migration. I was surprised to see the Premier get up during question period and talk about the tens of thousands of people who are coming here. We have some of the worst rates of out-migration, Mr. Speaker. And when I say worst, I mean the highest.

We also have a hard time attracting young people between the ages of 18 and 25. We're not doing well in that category. And if people don't see a future for themselves here in Saskatchewan, one must ask themselves, what is it about the Sask Party's policies, 14-15 years of Sask Party policies, that are causing people to doubt a future for themselves here in this great province, Mr. Speaker?

So we will see an increase in oversight with this bill, but of course given the government's poor track record on this issue, the opposition will be following this bill with great interest. And of course we have long been proponents of addressing the expedited recognition of credentials of foreign-trained individuals, Mr. Speaker. And we're eager to see where this legislation goes and hope that it does some work in addressing this issue, Mr. Speaker.

So with that I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 81, *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act, 2022*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 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 Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on Bill No. 82, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2022*. I guess before I start, again I know that many — and I've said this earlier — I know that many northern families are struggling to make ends meet. Our municipalities are struggling. They're doing all they can. And I want to thank our northern municipalities, whether it's in the Athabasca riding or Cumberland. I want to thank the northern leaders, our First Nations, our Métis leaders. They're doing all they can with hard times for their constituents.

The sad reality is, you know, we had a by-election up there in the Athabasca sector in the North. We just recently had a by-election and they elected a Sask Party member to be a part of government, to be able to help the Athabasca people and the northern people. And unfortunately we've seen a budget come out, and many northern people were hoping we would see some relief, we would see some changes, with the government saying, it's better to have a member a part of government than in opposition. He'll fight for you; he'll get things done for you.

Well I just want to tell you some of the stuff that the Sask Party government has cut over the years. I think about . . . And we talk about taxes. Well these taxes, any time you're coming with new taxes, 32 of them, taxes and fees, this is what the northern people got. This is what the members from Athabasca got, asking their new member part of government, more taxes and less supports. And it's sad. That's all I've got to say. It's very sad when it comes to that.

Now I think about some of the things that have been cut away. We look at STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company]. Many northern people relied on STC. So we had an opportunity to think, hey, you know . . . And I listened to them too, you know, as they were selling this, you know, better to have a member part of government and to push for the North.

I've seen some posts on Facebook and they talk about Highway 55. I know the member that was there before, you know, the member that represented the NDP [New Democratic Party] opposition, fought hard — fought hard for the North, for the West. And we see what the government did. Well you know, in this budget I think I've seen some posts, people laughing, saying, yeah, you guys voted in a Sask Party member to be a part of the government, and what we got is enough money on Highway 55 for a culvert. And they make it. And that isn't funny. That is sad when you see that.

You look at I guess the correctional centre that was closed under the Sask Party's watch in Buffalo Narrows, pretty sad. I was hoping and I think some people were hoping maybe we would get an announcement for that, but when we're always talking about taxes, the government likes to tax more, tax more through the people when the people are asking the government to help them. When the people of northern Saskatchewan need help, when the people of the rural areas need help, when many of our families are struggling, you want government. But in the North, unfortunately, we see less and less from our government, and they wonder why. And I guess, you know, they gave people an opportunity to say, hey, give us a try.

Well I think the people of Athabasca will be looking at this serious, knowing already they've got their answers. And I think many of them, I'll leave that to them. It's their decision as they

go to the polls and vote for who they . . . represent them.

But I think about the NORTEP [northern teacher education program] program being closed down. Maybe that member could get NORTEP opened up. Maybe there's things that, you know, members, a part of the government side, can get done. I wish him well because you know what? I also said, welcome to the Assembly. You know, congratulations.

But when I look at some of these bills and you see the new taxes and you knew what this government is doing and causing, sometimes these . . . There may be a government reason, that they have a rationale, they've consulted with people. I wonder how many municipalities, how many mayors, how many chiefs, how many First Nations, how many Métis citizens did they consult, saying we're going to charge 32 new fees and taxes. How do you feel about it? We know you need help. You know it's a crisis. We know affordability is . . .

But here's what we're going to give you instead. Instead of relief, we're going to give you more taxes. You're going to help us. Yes, we got lots of revenue coming in. We're happy; we're doing good. We got lots of revenue coming, but we want more, you know, because here we are. We're government.

And I think, as the Leader of the Opposition has made it clear, here's a Premier that doesn't care. And this government's showing it doesn't care about the most vulnerable. We see that time and time again on many files. And I'm going to have time at some point to remind these gentlemen and ladies and all of us in this Assembly why sometimes we can work together, we can work together, and the reason why we work together. And I've said that many times, Mr. Speaker, that sometimes we'd be willing, as opposition and government we've worked on legislation. We've worked on bills to come together.

But this is a bill, and some of the bills that they're doing when you're having new taxes and stuff. And you know, I heckled today quite a bit in there about the 32 new taxes. And I was proud to say, on behalf of the Saskatchewan, the Cumberland people I represent, I was happy to say I vote against 32 more taxes and fees when Saskatchewan families are saying, Doyle, we're struggling to ends meet. We don't know. Our seniors can't pay their bills, and they're struggling. And you're seeing some people cry, and they're struggling. It's not a joke that they're struggling.

And what did they get from a government? There you go. More fees, more taxes. And I don't know why that is, but that's the way it is. They're the government. They've been there just about 15 years, and I think people are getting a little tired. But at the end of the day I know there's going to be more opportunities to talk about some of the things.

I think about one thing that I've been getting people saying to me, and it's about the TSL [term supply licence] that used to be on the west side of our northern municipalities — a timber supply lease. There used to be an agreement. Well the Sask Party took that away from the northern municipalities, took it away. The only one that got taken away, taken away, and they gave it to someone else. How is that?

So maybe that member could work with his government and get that back in place, what things that have been taken away. I wish

him all the best on those there, and I know the good people of Athabasca and the North are going to wait to see the NORTEP program, many programs that were cut.

But I don't want to get away, Mr. Speaker, too far from my comments. So at this point, I know there's going to be more to say. My colleagues will have more to say. And hopefully, you know, we'll finally get a government someday that will actually care about the people — our seniors who can't . . . our families who are losing their hope, who are losing their lives to addictions, mental health, and end up committing suicide. Maybe we'll get a government that truly cares and will show some action someday. I'm hoping that. I'll always reach out to government as opposition to try to work with them to get that done because to me I think that's a crisis going on in our province.

[15:00]

And maybe you can use some of that new taxes and that revenue that you're gaining to help families who are struggling when it comes to addictions, mental health, and are losing their loved ones to suicide. Maybe you can use some of those revenues, those new revenues, to help families who are struggling.

And maybe once and for all we can say a government's taking some action instead of just giving lip service and saying, oh yeah, our hearts go out to you. I believe sometimes . . . And some of the members, I have to believe, are sincere when they say that. But I know families don't want to hear it anymore. They want to see some action.

So I don't want to go on too much. I know with these new taxes, I'm hoping any new revenue that will come in will help people in our good province. So I'm prepared to adjourn on Bill No. 82, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2022*. I'm prepared to adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 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 Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Wow, here we go. Bill No. 83, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2022* — more money for the government. Here we go. More money for the government.

Well you know what? People, are you struggling out there? Well you know what we're going to do for you as your government? We're going to get more taxes for you. Not only are we going to give 32 new taxes and not only are we going to get more fees, we're going to get more taxes and we're going to show you how we're going to do that.

And let me go back into it. I may as well go back right into some of the stuff I was saying earlier. Many of our northern people — those that live in the Athabasca sector, those that live in the Cumberland riding, those that live in the Athabasca riding — are hoping that they would get some relief from a government, would show . . .

I look at Highway 102 north of La Ronge. We're waiting. I hear nothing but complaints about people saying, holes, potholes, damage to their vehicles. I keep telling them, well send the bill. I have a member over there, he's a good guy, he's a highway minister. I don't mind him.

I said, you know what? If your vehicle's been damaged, send him a bill. He'll actually probably seriously have a look at it. And I hope he'll get it paid and he'll do justice and say that was wrong. That's our terrible highway. And someday I'm going to convince my colleagues and we're going to fix some of these northern roads. We're not just going to take your resources because we need all that money coming in, like we just love, you know, uranium; we love the mining sector in the North. And they constantly talk about how great it is. And we're getting lots of revenue, money coming in from those mining sectors to fix the roads, but not in northern Saskatchewan. We're using that money in other places, other highways that we're fixing.

And that's what they like doing. Well we like this stuff and we want to . . . Hey, you know what? Some of them even do members' statements about the North. And oh, they'll just talk about how great it is. And then again they'll say, because all that money is coming into government coffers. So they'll do a members' statement and say, all this money coming in. But the northern people, you get forgotten about. Those most vulnerable out there, our seniors, they get . . . Yet they're getting in lots of money, more taxes coming in.

I don't know how much more they're taking in tobacco. I was trying to look at it. I don't know for sure but, you know, I know we're going to have a chance in committee to ask questions and clarification saying, how much will this generate?

But I do know that in many of our northern communities and, you know, they see more tax increases, property taxes going up. Everything's going up. Everything. We see it. The cost of living is unreal for food, for shelter. And I'm telling you, I've seen families who struggle, and then I see more and more, you know.

I'll be honest with you. I buy some tobacco every now and then. And I buy tobacco and I pay the tax, and you know, the fees that are . . . [inaudible] . . . And now I'm going to pay more, and I'm going to pay more money to give government more tax money. But I hope they'll help the people that need it the most when they're getting so much money in their coffers that they're missing.

But I don't smoke. I used to smoke. 2000, I quit two packs a day. I decided, you know what, my health. I'll quit. I was a chain smoker. I quit. But you know what? So they're not going to get as much as they used to from me, trust me. I said, well, you know, that'll change.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, the interesting thing I'll say with that is when I get tobacco now, it's usually to give to an

elder when I'm getting advice, when it's for traditional . . . you know, I honour that, and that's important when it comes to tobacco. And I say that with nothing but respect.

But having said that, again, you know, I just look at all the money and the new taxes that government's generating, and it's coming into these coffers. And they keep saying, oh the government, you want us to spend more. You want us to spend more. You want to spend. The NDP's always saying, let's spend more. They're always after us to spend more.

Well you know what? Here's what I'm saying: you can also spend wisely. You can pick priorities. It doesn't always have to be whatever your priority you think is so important. Consult with our First Nations leaders, our Métis leaders. Consult with our municipalities. Consult with our seniors and find out: what can you do to help them? Talk to them and actually find out what they really need.

Be genuine. Don't say you're going to consult people and then you're just doing it to make it look good, because I've seen my colleague from Saskatoon Centre make it very clear when it comes to the duty to consult and accommodate on many files.

So I'm going different places, Mr. Speaker, because this bill gives me such an opportunity to talk about the money and the revenue that this government's getting into its coffers and who they're leaving behind. Like these are the type of bills where, you know, you have to be very . . . you always want to come back to the bill, like Bill 82. You always want to, you know, you want to come back to . . . or 83. You want to come back to these bills and talk about them to make sure, the importance of them.

But I just see all the revenue coming into this government's coffers. And unfortunately, so many people are left behind. They don't have a clue. They don't even know what this . . . What do you guys do? I get some people saying, well what do they do over there? I said, well they, government — opposition holds them accountable. We serve petitions. We ask them questions on your behalf. Well how come the government, when you ask these questions, how come the government doesn't take those revenues and help us? I said, well that's the Sask Party government right now. They have their priorities, and they're going to spend on what they think they want to spend on.

And you know, there's been a lot of different things that they think of as a priority. I think about, what are some of the things in Regina that they picked as a priority, spent tons of money? I think, wasn't it, wasn't . . . There was a bypass, land — what is it?

An Hon. Member: — The land deal at the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] there, yeah.

Mr. Vermette: — What else? Oh. G . . . What is it called?

An Hon. Member: — The GTH there, with the land deal.

Mr. Vermette: — GTH. Land deals and stuff like . . . So they pick priorities. And we see how all that goes over, you know, and I look at some of the . . . So the government can sit here and the government can say, you know, the government, the NDP opposition wants us to spend more money. All the time, spend

more money. No, no. We're saying it's time you start spending money wisely. You start consulting. You pick different priorities. Don't just do it where you think you need to; take care of all Saskatchewan citizens.

Like Athabasca. You know, you think about the people in Athabasca, their needs. And I'm glad my colleague reminded me about Athabasca. You know, it's important. That seat here, the people over there were all, you know, they went to the polls as best they could. I don't think a lot of them did. There were . . . probably there's reasons why. We'll see. There'll be more of them coming out in the next election, I promise you that. They will be. And they will be coming out like never before. Because, you know, it's interesting to see how it is.

But, Mr. Speaker, I know we've got more work to do here, and I've got one of my colleagues who needs to wind up on one of the bills. So I just wanted today, get an opportunity to be a little flexible and talk a little bit about all the revenue, all the money. And I mean billions upon billions upon billions of dollars coming in to the government coffers. And our poor seniors, the most vulnerable, saying, please help us. Those who are on the streets needing shelter, those most vulnerable people out there who are just asking government for a little help, a little understanding, and a little bit of compassion. And unfortunately we see sometimes . . .

I guess it's like the Leader of the Opposition says. The Premier and his government, they just don't care. And that's sad. But on that note, Mr. Speaker, I think I've gone on pretty good, so I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill 83, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2022*. I'm prepared to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 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 Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 84, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2024*. This is an interesting bill, Mr. Speaker. I'm willing to bet that the members opposite have been hearing from constituents across the province who are quite unhappy about the expansion of the PST [provincial sales tax], Mr. Speaker.

And you know, the din in here has been pretty significant this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, but that's okay. This side, we're used to it, and that's okay. They don't have to listen to what we have to say. But I don't feel any embarrassment in acknowledging, Mr. Speaker, that I do pay attention to what the members say on the other side. I pay very close attention . . . [inaudible interjection]

. . . Oh, the member from Walsh Acres is listening studiously, which I appreciate.

But you know, the Finance minister likes to talk about how there are three significant sources of revenue. Three streams of revenue, Mr. Speaker: resource revenue, federal transfers, and of course provincial taxation, Mr. Speaker. And of course this is a bill about the latter. This is an expansion of the PST at a moment when the people of Saskatchewan are living under historic inflation rates, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to speak briefly about revenue resources, Mr. Speaker, because Saskatchewan, as we know, has been enjoying windfall revenues due to tragic and unforeseen events in the Ukraine, Mr. Speaker. This has meant a windfall in resource revenues for Saskatchewan at this moment. And so because of this terrible situation we find ourselves in, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is actually enjoying a temporarily improved situation, Mr. Speaker.

Meanwhile things are really bleak out there for individuals, for families. And I know the members opposite are hearing from their constituents. I hear from them all the time, Mr. Speaker. I speak to them. I hear the fear in their voices. How are they going to pay the rent? How are they going to afford groceries? How are they going to afford their utility bills, Mr. Speaker? I hear the fear in their voices nearly on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker. And I know that my constituency, Regina Elphinstone-Centre, has been perhaps disproportionately hit by some of these issues, but I know that it's something that's happening to everyone. Everyone is feeling that squeeze, Mr. Speaker.

So we have, on the one hand, people are struggling more than ever. And then on the other hand, we have this windfall in resource revenues, Mr. Speaker. Any self-respecting government would know what to do in that situation, Mr. Speaker. They would know what to do in that situation, particularly given that the windfall and resource revenue comes from resources that belong to all people, Mr. Speaker. We all have a stake in those resources. We all should collectively benefit from those resources, Mr. Speaker.

But instead we see a government that has imposed 32 regressive taxes and fee hikes, increasing residential property taxation, something that will hit folks on fixed incomes the hardest — seniors, Mr. Speaker — while Saskatchewan is enjoying windfall resource revenues. It really does beg the question, Mr. Speaker, about this government's priorities.

So this bill has been canvassed by my colleagues, Mr. Speaker. It is something that the opposition will continue to voice our concern and criticism about. And so with that, I am pleased to adjourn debate on Bill No. 84, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2022*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to get ready

for committee, I move that this Assembly do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:15.]

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Provincial Capital Commission

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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
Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation
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