



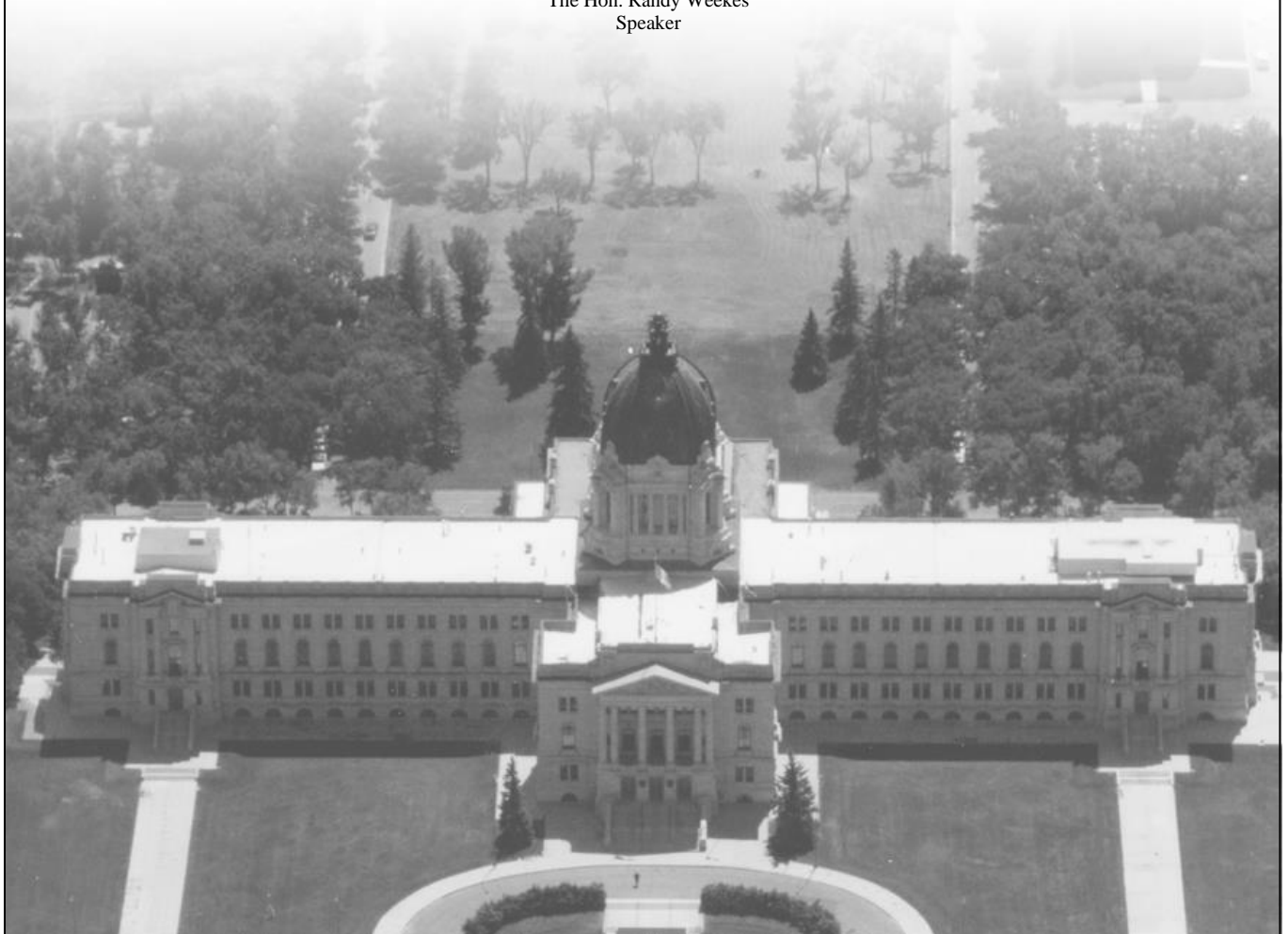
SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

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



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
2nd Session — 29th Legislature

Lieutenant Governor — His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, S.O.M., M.S.M.

Speaker — Hon. Randy Weekes
Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Ryan Meili

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

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

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

Deputy Clerk — Iris Lang

Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyak

Sergeant-at-Arms — Sean Darling

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Members of the Legislative Assembly, it is my honour to introduce Ms. Mary McFadyen, Ombudsman and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner for the province of Saskatchewan. Mary has been in the position since 2015 and is set to retire in early May.

Sitting with Ms. McFadyen are members of her family, friends, and staff from her office. Mary's husband, Jean-Luc Petit, Greg Sykes, Leila Dueck, Renee Gavigan, Andrea Smandych, Karin Dupeyron, Jennifer Hall, Laurie Taylor, and Yinka Jarikre.

I invite all members to join me at the farewell reception for Ms. McFadyen today at 3 p.m. in the Saskatchewan Gallery with a short program starting at 3:15. I ask that all members please join me in welcoming Ms. McFadyen and her guests to their Legislative Assembly.

Introduction of guests. I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and this Assembly several visitors seated in the west gallery this afternoon. These visitors join us from across Saskatchewan and Canada to support the important work of Advocis, the Financial Advisors Association of Canada, and the positive impact that financial advisors can have in our lives, in our community, and indeed in the economy, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Advocis is the largest voluntary professional membership association of financial advisors in Canada, representing more than 17,000 member-clients and 40 chapters across the country. Yesterday the Premier and I had the opportunity to meet with this group to discuss key issues of importance to their industry.

Mr. Speaker, let me introduce those that are in the west gallery. Greg Pollock is the Advocis president and CEO [chief executive officer]. Curtis Kimpton, Abe Toews, Nick Colosimo, James Ryu, Marie-Claire Barba-Flores, John Dean, Kelly Gustafson, Sam Lichtman, Tyler Monteyne, Wally Klassen, Darren Ulmer, Tammy Richmond, and Becky Brenner.

Mr. Speaker, I want to personally thank Advocis for their advocacy and collaboration regarding Bill 203, *The Financial*

Planners and Financial Advisors Act, which was passed by this House in June of 2020. We continue to work with stakeholders like Advocis in advancing consumer protection legislation in the financial sector in the province, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming these members to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Minister of Justice in welcoming these fine people to this, their Assembly. We had the opportunity to meet today. And certainly on behalf of the critic, my colleague from Regina Douglas Park, and on behalf of our whole caucus, the official opposition, we truly valued your time in the meeting.

The work that you do to develop and ensure the financial health and the prosperity, not just of families and individuals in this province but also the work that you do with community-based organizations, non-profit, and charitable giving. We really value that, the relationships that you bring to your clients and your customers. They're not transactional; they truly are relationships. So thank you for the work that you do. And it was wonderful to share some time with you earlier today and look forward to spending some more tonight.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I will take a moment to welcome also to this, their Assembly, nine grade 10 students from Regina Christian School seated in the east gallery with their teacher Jennifer Kramer. It's a pleasure to have you with us here today. I look forward to meeting with you as your MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] following question period, and I hope you genuinely enjoy your time here today. And thank you for joining us in this, your legislature.

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

Mr. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's a great honour to introduce to this Legislative Assembly 14 grade 12 students from Vanier Collegiate, who are seated in the west gallery. These are 14 Canadian studies students who are joining us today with their teacher Douglas Panko. And it's an honour to have them here. I look forward to meeting them after question period is over, and I would ask all members to please join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask for leave for extended introduction please.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join

with my colleague, the member from Moose Jaw North, in welcoming the group from Vanier Collegiate, along with their teacher in the gallery on the west. I have a strong connection to this group, Mr. Speaker, as this is the last group that I worked with and the last school I was at before I was so fortunate to become an elected member of this Assembly.

So with that said, I had the great distinct pleasure to work with Doug Panko, to see him in action. And it was quite a privilege, that's for sure. He certainly is a brilliant teacher. He is truly a lifelong learner as an educator. As a parent, he's one of those guys that you hope that your kids get taught by, and as a colleague, you hope that one day you get to teach like. And so that certainly would be Doug. He is loved by all, and it's certainly good to see you here, my friend.

As far as the students go, many of these students make up some of the last students that I ever taught actually. And so maybe they're cheering still for that reason; maybe there's sadness. We'll only venture to guess. But they're an amazing group of people, a talented group of people, and just good people.

And you know, I don't know, Mr. Speaker. Maybe this isn't the time or the place but . . . Okay. I appreciate the encouragement. You know, while I taught, I created this thing called Skoropad dollars in my class. And you know, I thought it was ingenious. The kids loved it. It went on for a couple of years, and then they started wondering what they could do with this currency. I maybe didn't give them the clearest of answer or direction as to that, so a lot of controversy was struck up because of that. In particular, students were saying that it was just a cheap ploy I was using to motivate them. They could never buy anything with that.

And I want to go on record, in front of them, in front of all of my colleagues here, and say that that was pretty much what it was about. Yes. But having said that, Mr. Speaker, it is still a currency. It's still functional, and I am going to give each one of you 100 Skoropad dollars for being here today. So welcome to your Assembly.

The Speaker: — That's a hard act to follow, but I would also like to join in welcoming Doug Panko and his social 30 class from Vanier Collegiate in Moose Jaw. Doug was an integral member of the steering committee for the Saskatchewan Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy for several years. He is a dedicated educator and his students are very fortunate to have him as their teacher. Please join me in welcoming Doug and his class to their legislature.

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 from northeast Saskatchewan as it relates to the unsafe and inadequate condition of Highway 9, particularly between Hudson Bay and Preeceville, Mr. Speaker. This is a long-standing situation that hasn't been resolved. It creates unsafe conditions for those using this vital artery: those farms, those businesses, those in the community, and of course, those tourists to that beautiful part of the province.

The prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the government to immediately address the inadequate condition of Highway 9 by working with and listening to the concern of municipalities, residents, and industry.

The petition is signed by concerned folks from Hudson Bay. I so submit.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise this afternoon to present a petition calling on the Saskatchewan Party government to fix the crisis in our classrooms. Mr. Speaker, we have a number of these petitions that have been signed over the years asking for basically the same thing — asking for an adequate plan to protect and support our classrooms, Mr. Speaker. Yet again this year's budget was a disappointment to all those who've been signing these petitions.

I'll read some of the points: that the Sask Party government's cuts mean falling per-student funding and fewer supports for students as they recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Speaker; that after years of underfunding, school divisions have nowhere left to cut that will not impact student learning, Mr. Speaker; and that the Sask Party government's cuts leave educators and support staff without the resources that they need to support pandemic recovery. And this failure to invest in our classrooms is having serious consequences today, Mr. Speaker, and will continue into the future until it's rectified.

I'll read the prayer:

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

Those who have signed this petition today reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to petition the Government of Saskatchewan to fix the rural health care staffing crisis. They might know this by heart at this point, Mr. Speaker, but I will let them know that these citizens wish to bring to our attention that recruitment and retention of health care professionals is of particular concern in Saskatchewan's rural health care facilities, leading to many emergency room, acute, lab, and X-ray service disruptions; that the ongoing pandemic has created burnout and led to early retirements and resignations, which has rippling effects for small cities and towns.

Health care workers and their families are valuable assets in Saskatchewan communities and local economies, and at the 2021 SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities]

convention, over 94 per cent of rural leaders voted to support a resolution acknowledging the nursing and health care worker shortage across Saskatchewan.

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 fix the rural health care staffing crisis.

This petition today is signed by individuals from Wilkie and Tramping Lake, Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition calling on this government to fund in vitro fertilization treatments here in the province of Saskatchewan. I rise every day and present this petition, and it almost feels like some days I'm presenting a rural health care petition, Mr. Speaker. Today the signatories are from Bjorkdale and Tisdale. And, Mr. Speaker, this is not a rural petition. This is not an urban petition. This is a petition that cuts across party lines, not an NDP [New Democratic Party] petition, certainly not a Sask Party issue. This impacts one in six couples in Canada, one in six in Saskatchewan.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I was motivated to start this petition after, you know, some personal experiences, but more so seeing so many people around me struggle with infertility. And I'm sure members on both sides of the House have those people that they care about and that they love in their lives.

[13:45]

And anyone who's ever seen an individual or a family go through this know the impact that it has. And this is not a rural issue; this is not an urban issue. But this is a health care issue, Mr. Speaker, because this is a health condition. And for anyone desperately hoping, pleading, praying to be able to start a family, we need some action on this front.

So I'll read the prayer:

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

I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

2021 Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal Recipients

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is National Volunteer Week, and residents across Canada are being acknowledged for their dedication to the spirit of volunteerism.

This week the provincial government had the honour of presenting nine dedicated individuals with the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

Mr. Speaker, through you I ask all members, please join me in congratulating Noëla Bamford of Regina; Bob Bjarnason of Churchbridge; Velma Harasen of Regina; Major Keith Inches of Regina; Ishita Mann of Saskatoon; Captain Cathy Sarich of Regina; Joyce Willick of Spiritwood; Elaine Wirtz of Wadena; and posthumously, Bob White of Rosetown.

Mr. Speaker, all of these extraordinary citizens have been awarded for their outstanding contributions to Saskatchewan through lifetimes of service, through charity, volunteering, military service, and more. These recipients join the ranks of 240 exemplary volunteers recognized in previous years.

Mr. Speaker, without dedicated individuals like these, Saskatchewan would not be as great of a province as it is. These are people who really help make a community function. These are the folks who keep the community centres going, who are always there to lend a hand, and they do it for nothing more than a thank you. So, Mr. Speaker, today we all say thank you to all the volunteers of the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Saskatoon Fairview.

Canadian Infertility Awareness Week

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Canadian Infertility Awareness Week which is taking place April 24th to April 30th of this year. Mr. Speaker, one in six couples in Canada experience infertility, including more than 188,000 Saskatchewan residents. We all know someone who has struggled with infertility.

And while in vitro fertilization treatments are available, the treatments are exorbitantly expensive with a single cycle costing as much as \$10,000. While other provinces have created programs that financially assist in providing IVF [in vitro fertilization] treatments for those struggling to conceive, there continues to be no financial support for potential future families here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the good people at Fertility Matters Canada have been working tirelessly to provide support, awareness, and education to Canadians while advocating for equal access to fertility treatments. They want all Canadians, including members of this Chamber, to know that fertility issues are not just a health issue but also a social and economic one. It should come as no surprise since we here in the official opposition have been petitioning this government for some time now to provide financial assistance for IVF treatments to support families who are experiencing infertility.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members join me in recognizing Canadian Infertility Awareness Week and immediately move to cover the financial burden of two rounds of IVF treatments for Saskatchewan families experiencing infertility. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Swearing-In at Nipawin & District Chamber of Commerce

Northwest.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I swear that I will faithfully and truly perform my duty as executive member of the Nipawin & District Chamber of Commerce and to act in the best interest and as for the benefit of the chamber, so help me God.

Those were the words the incoming board for 2022 repeated after me as I helped administer the oath of office at the annual Nipawin & District Chamber of Commerce. The member from Carrot River Valley also graciously sat at the head table with me.

The incoming president is Greg Sproat. Recognition was given to Ben Paskaruk for his dedication to the community.

Every year this event showcases and recognizes local businesses' achievements, while many other people help sponsor this valuable community celebration. The passion and the hard work of these citizens was very evident.

And actually the highways to Nipawin are very good as well. I know the people of Nipawin are very appreciative. So well done, Nipawin and area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Regina Brewery Raises Money for Food Bank

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize great business leaders in our province, people who care and people who happen to own and operate the largest craft brewery here in Saskatchewan. Not only are these fine folks wildly successful entrepreneurs, they're also people who believe that no one in this province should deal with hunger. But they also know that food bank use and hunger is on the rise.

Now these incredible folks aren't new to community leadership. They raise money annually for Carmichael Outreach, and they made national news by tossing out racist, anti-mask protesters who destroyed the memorial to residential school survivors on the steps of this very building.

But to the beer, Mr. Speaker. Here in Regina, the team at Pile O' Bones Brewing partnered with the incredible Leo's Group to produce and sell a limited-edition Community Lager to support the Regina Food Bank. Pile O' Bones produced this beer with barley from Saskatchewan, hops from Saskatchewan, and they used all of the revenue from that product to help feed our city and surrounding communities. Each pint sold provided 24 meals; each can, 15. Through their leadership, they provided 80,282 meals through the Regina Food Bank and they helped fill 10,000 fridges and pantries.

Glenn, Josh, Brent, and Nathan are sterling businessmen and, well, human beings. They support local and they invest in local. I ask all members to join me in recognizing these fine folks and raise a pint in their honour for feeding 10,000 people in our province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Remembering the Lessons of History on Yom HaShoah

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is Yom HaShoah, otherwise known as Holocaust Memorial Day. From 1933 to 1945, 6 million Jews were murdered by the Nazi regime, a culmination of thousands of years of anti-Semitism, of pogroms, expulsions, and terror.

Last month I had the opportunity to sit down with Professor Irwin Cotler of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance to discuss the importance of remembrance. Here in Saskatchewan, we must not forget the legacy of the Holocaust. Synagogues across the province have had memorial events and will continue to have them over the next month. At many of these events, Mr. Speaker, Holocaust survivors share their stories and experiences with thousands throughout the province in the hopes of creating a more peaceful and inclusive society.

But there will always be those, Mr. Speaker, who look to avoid direct confrontation in the hopes that our enemies will forget their evil ways. Mr. Speaker, those voices don't speak for the rest of us. Considering recent events, we do not believe that peace can be achieved by avoiding the face of evil.

We seek to honour those who lost their lives in the Holocaust by learning lessons of history that have taught us. Those lessons are written in blood, remembered in tears that represent the horrifying price demanded should we falter in our own ongoing fight against evil. We will remain eternally vigilant so that we must never forget the lessons of that dark chapter of human history. Never again, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Edam 3 Stars Win Provincial Championship

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The under-15 Edam 3 Stars recently claimed the U-15 [under 15] C provincial championship title. Mr. Speaker, this team, like other rural communities, needed to join forces with the neighbouring community to ensure they had a full roster. This year they joined with Turtleford, a rival to Edam in previous years. The team consisted of eight Edam, eight Turtleford, and two Glaslyn players. Two players were also picked up from Loon Lake for the provincial games.

In speaking with head coach Joel Jullion, he said the boys complemented one another very well this year. Playoff games included matchups with Clavet, Porcupine Plain, Kelvington, and Rose Valley. This season the boys also got to experience two bus trips which Joel says were a lot of fun. Head coach Joel Jullion said the boys were a resilient bunch, and they worked hard all season.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this Assembly join me in congratulating the under-15 C Edam 3 Star team, the coaching staff — head coach Joel Jullion, assistant coaches Brandon Wall and Seth Bloom, and manager Danny Harty — along with the team parents and the communities of Edam, Glaslyn, and Turtleford. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

**SaskPower Announces
New Wind and Solar Plant near Estevan**

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To put it lightly, SaskPower has been busy. From the storm in the Southwest a couple weeks ago to the Colorado low that swept the Southeast early this week, crews have been working day and night to keep the lights on.

But, Mr. Speaker, the weather isn't the only thing that's kept SaskPower busy. Just this morning, SaskPower announced an incredible 4700-megawatt new wind and solar power project. The 85 new wind turbines now online are providing enough emission-free electricity to power 187,000 homes.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of attending the Highfield solar facility ribbon cutting last fall near Swift Current, which was the first utility-scale solar plant in Saskatchewan. And I'm pleased to report the new solar project near Estevan that was announced today will be a whopping 10 times the size of Highfield, powering over 25,000 homes. This will help SaskPower meet its emissions reduction targets for 2030.

Mr. Speaker, I now invite all the members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating SaskPower in our historic announcement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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." That's what the Premier had to say about climate change, but it doesn't stop there. That I-don't-care attitude pervades this government's response to so many issues.

More people have died from COVID-19 this year than at the same point in 2021, the highest death rate in the entire country. More Saskatchewan people are in hospital with COVID right now than at any other point in the pandemic. Thousands are getting sick, missing work, missing school, facing potential serious, long-term complications. Every day multiple families are saying goodbye to a loved one, lost forever to a preventable illness.

And the Premier, he has nothing to say about it at all — not a word of condolence, not a word of concern. People are dying and the Premier of this province 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, most certainly myself, the Health minister, many other officials have been out over the course of the last couple of years communicating with Saskatchewan people with respect to COVID and with respect to other things of significance, Mr. Speaker, that the government does need to be out and obviously to answer for.

What we're seeing here, Mr. Speaker — and I thought it was gone but it came back today in these comments — is we see an NDP leader that came into office and he was promising to do politics differently. Now what we see is an NDP leader that is leaving office and he's reverting to the same old smear tactics that his predecessor, Dwain Lingenfelter, utilized, Mr. Speaker, in splicing together different statements, different quotes to fabricate something that was actually never said.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP keep doing the same thing over and over and then they wonder why they continue to get the same results. Well now we see the NDP is going to change leaders again. But rest assured, Mr. Speaker — and the people of this province can rest assured — although they may be changing leaders, it's the same old NDP.

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

Support for Health Care Workers

Mr. Meili: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. "I don't care." Those are his words and those are his actions. We see it over and over again. The Premier may not care about the health of Saskatchewan people, but there is a group that does. It's right in their name: health care workers. They care. But they're burnt-out. Over 60 per cent of Saskatchewan registered nurses are talking about leaving the profession. We're down 82 family doctors from when the Premier took office and more are leaving all the time.

The SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] released a member survey today with some sobering numbers. Seventy-four per cent of physicians describe their practices as less satisfying, a significant worsening since 2020. Sixty-five per cent say that their mental health is getting worse. That number of mental health concerns rises to 85 per cent of docs in regional centres.

Does the Premier recognize that his choices, the disrespect that he's shown health care workers, is chasing the people who care away and making it harder for Saskatchewan people to access the care they need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Well again, Mr. Speaker, we see an NDP that is changing leaders but not changing in what they are saying. And those are the Leader of the Opposition words, the outgoing Leader of the Opposition's words, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

What we have seen on this side of the House is action — action in investing in health care facilities across this province, action in recruiting over 1,000 physicians that are practising in this province, action in recruiting and adding over 4,200 nurses that are providing service in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, after the last two years, you are seeing additional incentives in this budget that was introduced by the Deputy Premier this very session, Mr. Speaker. A four-point plan to recruit, to retain, to train, and to incentivize nurses into our facilities across the province, to fund the training positions, to add 300 continuing care assistants into our long-term care facilities across the province, and continued funding into the

College of Medicine to ensure that we are training our physicians, Mr. Speaker, and then recruiting them into our communities in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier talks about a four-point plan, but we've seen that four-point plan every day. It's downplay, deflect, disparage, and deny. That's what we see from this Premier.

And what could be a bigger evidence of the lack of care and concern than to pretend that the serious issues facing our doctors today aren't happening? That same survey showed that 55 per cent of physicians are planning to reduce their hours of work. That number rises to 67 per cent among docs in regional centres, two out of every three docs in smaller centres set to cut their hours. Families are already having a terrible time finding a family doctor, getting care in their community. This level of reduction in services will devastate rural health care. What's this Premier's plan to ensure he doesn't?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, under the NDP, one of those three doctors wasn't even here. Mr. Speaker, this government's record when it comes to health care is solid. This government's word as we move forward with our investments in health care, whether it be investing in the College of Medicine to train physicians right here in our province, whether it be recruiting those physicians abroad, whether it be increasing the training seats for our nurses in this province to 1,000 a year now, recruiting nurses, 150 we're looking to recruit from the Philippines to come to Saskatchewan this very year, Mr. Speaker.

The commitment we had in the election campaign that was ran just under two years ago, 300 CCAs [continuing care aide] will be added to our complement of CCAs offering care to our family members in long-term care facilities across this province. Mr. Speaker, this very budget funded those training seats for those continuing care assistants.

We are . . . As I said, the four-point plan is to retain, recruit, to incentivize, and to ensure that we are training nurses in this province to provide services in this province, Mr. Speaker. In the meantime, we continue to work with all of the staff that we have, given two very challenging years in this province, bringing people back into their place of service, in their facilities across the province, bringing in contract nurses to support the efforts that are happening there, Mr. Speaker.

This government's record when it comes to health care — whether it be 10 years ago, whether it be 14 years ago, or whether it be today — is sound, and it is on behalf of the people that we represent.

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

Mr. Meili: — Well there you see it again, deflect and deny, take no responsibility for the seriousness of the situation he's created. Sixty per cent of RNs [registered nurse] talking about leaving, and we're talking about 150 coming from the Philippines. They're welcome, but there's no way that's going to meet the

need.

And let's not talk just about nurses. It's not just a reduction of hours we're seeing from doctors. That same survey showed that 19 per cent of physicians were planning to retire in the next two years. That's up from 5 per cent the year before. One in five doctors planning to walk away from the profession, and who knows how many more talking about leaving the province. These are catastrophic numbers and all we hear from this Premier, no acknowledgement, just spin after spin after spin because the fact is he doesn't care.

Well instead of denying and downplaying the seriousness of the situation, will the Premier change his tactic? Will he commit to going to the front lines, seeing with his own eyes what's happening, hearing from the docs and nurses who are giving their all, and listening to them about how to fix Saskatchewan health care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite can certainly spin this. Nobody on this side of the House or within our government disrespects anything that those front-line health care workers are doing. They are continuously working. We are supporting them. We meet with them . . . I know they want to heckle over there. There's lots of them that always want to say something, but they never have the courage to jump to their feet, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what we have done is we've created a very robust compensation package for doctors and also for nurses to be able to manage through the pandemic. We cannot thank them enough for what they have done, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to support them.

The member from Swift Current, the member of Rural and Remote Health and Seniors and Mental Health and Addictions, we're meeting with the SMA on a regular basis. We meet with doctor . . . [inaudible] . . . probably every six weeks. We're attending the SMA convention next week, Mr. Speaker.

We are listening to doctors. We're certainly not listening to that one.

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

Mr. Meili: — Well, Mr. Speaker, that is incredible. Nothing proves more that this minister and this Premier are out of touch with what's going on with health care workers than that message that they don't feel disrespected. That just shows that this minister needs to do what he told his officials to do: get out of his ivory tower and go see what's happening on the front lines.

Maybe then he'd find out why the doctors of this province are feeling overburdened, burnt-out, ready to walk away, why two-thirds of them are describing worsening mental health. Fifty-six per cent said their workload's gotten worse. Thirty-four per cent say their financial situation's gotten worse. But most striking in this survey was that the top concern identified was the "lack of a physician voice in the pandemic response." Seventy-six per cent of the docs surveyed identified it the top issue, is the disrespect they feel, the fact that their voice isn't heard, the fact that this

Premier doesn't care.

Does the Premier now recognize it was a bad idea to ignore the advice of doctors and the health of their patients? Does he care that his choices cost lives through the pandemic, will only cost more as the health care system struggles without the doctors and nurses that he's chasing away?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Again pretty rich talk about chasing away doctors. They need to turn around and look at their record. 450 nurses walked out of this province during their time, their tenure. Also 173 doctors walked out the door.

Mr. Speaker, we almost have 1,000 more doctors in our province right now because of this government and the investment that we have in health care, not just in operating but also in capital. Let's not forget how many hospitals they closed down — 52 hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, we're building hospitals. We got the children's hospital, Moose Jaw hospital, working on . . . Man, that member's got a lot to say over there. He asked a question, but he certainly doesn't have the respect of anybody in this House to be able to listen. Maybe he should do more of that.

Because the person that we're listening to is Dr. Shahab, Mr. Speaker. We've been listening to him throughout that. And I know the member opposite does not like Dr. Shahab and he does not appreciate the advice, because it doesn't feed into his narrative, Mr. Speaker.

We'll continue to listen to Dr. Shahab. We will continue to work on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Fuel Costs and Support for Road Builders

Mr. Wotherspoon: — A petulant response from that minister, Mr. Speaker, petulant.

You know, we've been hearing from highway contractors and road builders from across Saskatchewan with respect to the extraordinary cost pressures that they're facing. I know the minister has been hearing from them as well.

The situation has been compounded by the significant reduction in spring and fall tenders by that government and the skyrocketing cost of fuel. The road builders have been advocating for some needed fuel relief, as other provinces are providing. I've raised this with this minister. I've pushed it with him in committee.

The minister knows how huge this issue is for the industry and how important safe highways are, but we haven't heard any commitments. We haven't heard any actions on this front. What's the plan to provide some needed relief to ensure needed highway construction and rebuilding this season?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. It's been a long time since Highways has had a question here.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement and myself recently met with the board of directors on the heavy construction association, and we committed to further discussions with the association to better assess the needs of the industry.

Some of the tenders do contain a fuel escalation clause, and we've now started paying the diesel fuel adjustments monthly to help contractors with cash flow. Mr. Speaker, this government provided 300 million in stimulus funding for road construction over the past number of years, and that kept this industry working.

Mr. Speaker, the party opposite told municipalities to fix their own roads and left a billion-dollar pothole in our highway network. Seriously. We will take no lessons from the members opposite.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we know how important safe highways are to Saskatchewan people. We know how concerned they are about the state of our highways. Just think of SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and SARM conventions recently and the expressions there.

We know that the president of the heavy construction association has spoken out about the extraordinary pressure that road builders are facing. And we know that the highway building season, the road building season is upon us. That they need some relief. That skyrocketing fuel costs pose a serious challenge to getting the job done. And we know what the results will be if that's not there.

The minister references the fuel escalation clause. It's very limited. It's inadequate, as has been described, as are the woeful consumption rates that are in place. Why won't this minister just do the right thing and make sure that we're able to build the roads we need in this building season and commit to some fuel relief to the industry now?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the members opposite have been asking for more money for health care, more money for social services, more money for education, and now they're looking for more money for the contractors. They want more money in every area of this budget, but they have not presented a plan on how to pay for it.

The NDP platform in the 2020 election mentioned highways exactly zero times. The NDP fiscal tables, which promise over 4 billion, 4 billion in new spending, didn't spend a single dime on highways.

Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite are so concerned about . . . are so concerned, they should speak to their newly harmonized Justin Trudeau and the NDP federal government to go out and

scrap the carbon tax, and then our fuel would be a lot cheaper. That tax is costing Highways an extra \$1.6 million this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Yesterday that minister stood on his soapbox and bragged about a fund that may add up to 200 EAs [educational assistant] to our education system. At best, that math works out to one-third of an EA per school.

Mr. Speaker, our EAs are gold, but this budget pales in comparison to the supports that are needed. There are over 21 per cent fewer EAs working in our schools today than there were just five years ago. Why does that minister need to pat himself on the back for leaving a penny from where he took a pound?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm happy to rise in my place and talk about the fact that this budget does provide for additional funds to hire up to 200 new EA positions in the province, Mr. Speaker, all across this province.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward to seeing school divisions use those dollars, access those dollars, and make applications to the ministry for those dollars. Those are classroom supports that we know are very valuable right across the school system, and we're happy to provide those conditional dollars to school divisions that choose to access those and hire up to those additional 200 positions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this government could not be more out of touch. Quebec, BC [British Columbia], the Yukon, Nunavut have all laid out plans to help kids get back on track. Ontario recently released a plan to support kids, investing \$1.6 billion. Here our schools are facing more cuts yet again. Learning disrupted, Mr. Speaker, mental health concerns increased. After all that our kids have been through, how is it that your government couldn't scrape together enough to cover costs, let alone get a plan together to get our kids back on track?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well certainly this budget does ensure that we are back on track in this province, including the education system.

Mr. Speaker, the interim educational plan that has been agreed upon by the education council and all of our school divisions does put a focus on ensuring that kids get the grade attainment that they need to finish high school for those that maybe had missed some classes or need additional supports to get their high school credits.

[14:15]

It does focus on literacy levels at the early years, especially grades 1 to 5, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that kids are reading at grade level, especially reading at grade level 3 by grade 3. And that will certainly be supported by the additional EA positions that we're going to support in the classroom, Mr. Speaker.

And the third area of priority as a part of our interim plan is mental health supports, Mr. Speaker. More supports in the classrooms, working with Health, for example, on the building capacity program, moving more supports through that program and looking at perhaps expanding it to additional schools, Mr. Speaker.

Those are our three priority areas, Mr. Speaker, and that's where the funding is going. Thank you.

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

Housing Supports

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Social Services continues to outsource her responsibilities to municipalities and community-based organizations, leaving them to do all the heavy lifting when it comes to responding to our ballooning housing crisis. Now the fate of the shelter that replaced Camp Hope here in Pepsi Park is up in the air, in no small part because this government has failed to put in place a housing strategy that works. People struggling to secure stable housing are in no better position now than when the shelter was created.

And the folks out there working hard to stem the tide of suffering are having to contend with government programs that are undermining people's ability to get back on their feet. An obvious first step, Mr. Speaker, is for that minister to fix the broken SIS [Saskatchewan income support] program that's leaving more and more people out on the streets to begin with.

Will the minister stop sending the message she doesn't care? Will she finally commit to overhauling SIS today?

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and once again I do thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, she brought up the coordinated effort that the Ministry of Social Services has with the municipalities, whether it be here in Regina or in Saskatoon, and community-based organizations, and we continue to work with both of those organizations. We were very thankful that they stepped forward when we needed those temporary shelters put up over the winter months. And now we're actively working with them on a long-term plan to try and figure out how we can resolve some of these issues moving forward.

She said that it wasn't effective and nothing was getting done. I've got reports that have come back from both the Saskatoon Tribal Council and RT/SIS [Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services Inc.] here in Regina, Mr. Speaker, and they have been able to successfully help some of those individuals move on to housing and to help them become successful, Mr. Speaker.

We know that there are very complicated issues with these

individuals. Some of them will always need our help, and we're trying to figure out how to get those wraparound services to them to ensure that we are there for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Very rich to hear the minister refer to the Regina tribal council who was quoted today as saying, "We have government programs that are not meant to truly help people attain independence," Mr. Speaker.

Under this minister's watch, we are housing people in hotel rooms. At what cost? Nobody knows. We are housing people in jail cells, as we saw last week when a Saskatoon man passed away because police could not find anywhere else to take him, Mr. Speaker.

This is exactly what was identified in our report. Reactive approaches cost the public more and they don't move the ball forward in addressing housing issues. In a province as prosperous as this, people are languishing on the streets, and the minister just has to take a walk to see that, Mr. Speaker. And make no mistake, the public is paying for that government's callous incompetence.

Will the minister acknowledge that band-aid, reactive approaches are not working and finally commit today to developing a plan to address the housing and homelessness crisis in Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I guess just to start off with, once again we're going to have to correct the record here. There is no Regina treaty . . . tribal council here within the Regina area. It's RT/SIS, Regina Indian treaty services, Mr. Speaker. So if the member opposite wants to talk about them, she should even know what they're titled, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to collaborate with our partners, whether that be community-based organizations or the municipalities. The Ministry of Social Services truly does care about the individuals that live in this province and does care about the homeless population. That is why we are committed to working with those organizations, finding a solution for what's going to happen after those temporary shelters close. We are actively working with them, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Suicide Prevention Strategy

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, this is the 12th day this spring I rise on behalf of Saskatchewan families, today the Ball 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 I extend my deepest sympathies to the Ball family and to every family across this province that has lost a loved one to suicide.

Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget we are committing additional dollars towards Saskatchewan's suicide prevention plan, known as Pillars for Life, which was released in May of 2020. In this year's budget, we are committing an additional \$1 million towards the actions that are in that plan, bringing the total to nearly three and a quarter million dollars over the past three budget cycles, Mr. Speaker.

And some of the actions that have been accomplished and continue to be worked on as part of the suicide prevention plan here in this province include improving psychiatric access for patients across Saskatchewan but particularly at emergency rooms in northwest areas of this province. And we continue to further expand mental health first aid training programs all across Saskatchewan to help provide increased supports to people across Saskatchewan in that regard.

And we're also enhancing research to support local suicide prevention as well, and initiatives that have an impact directly on northern youth in particular, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to continue to consult with people across this province as we work on enhancing these strategies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And on behalf of those families in northern Saskatchewan, we are losing so many of our young people to suicide. Mental health is a crisis. We keep telling the government it's a crisis. Our leaders keep saying it's a crisis, whether it's First Nations, our Métis leaders, our municipal leaders, our front-line workers. I want to thank our health care workers, the mental health people who are working, doing all they can. They're burning out.

You need to get an action. You need to have a plan in place. We'll work with you. We'll work with you as a government. We'll work with you as a government, but it's time for some action. And it's time to take it serious and say we're going to work together and get this done to save lives in Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister, please get a plan. Work with us. Work with the leaders. Work with communities. Work with families who have lost so much. Please do that.

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to work with communities and community leaders across this province. In September of 2020 we signed a letter of understanding with the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] as well as with Indigenous Services Canada to work towards some of these initiatives.

And we continue to have meetings with the FSIN. Those have happened over the past number of months and continue to happen this year, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to continue to do that, meetings across the province . . . Mr. Speaker, the member opposite asked the question, and I would appreciate the same opportunity to respond to that question.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity at the member's request to travel to northern Saskatchewan earlier this winter to meet with

community leaders. And we continue to consult with people across this province and we're open to any ideas and suggestions that would come from people regardless of where they live across Saskatchewan to help us in this challenge with suicide prevention. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — In accordance with section 39 of *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*, I am tabling the annual report from the Advocate for Children and Youth for the year 2021.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Return No. 18

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the requested document does not exist, I wish to convert return 18 to motions for returns.

The Speaker: — Return no. 18 has been converted to motions for return (debatable).

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 Saskatchewan Rivers.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Frankly I'm amazed that Bill No. 70 is still here. The public has been discussing this topic now that they're aware of it. Where I live in rural Saskatchewan, rural crime is at an all-time high. The public is questioning me: why do the politicians in the ivory tower, is how they put it, why do they need further protection? And I say, well maybe you should ask the ministry, the government, the minister who is trying to explain why we need more security here.

She said we need security around the building and the legislative district created around the building, the parking. So this new direction of security would be appointed by the minister of the Crown. This is very unusual. It would make the security out of the hands of the Sergeant-at-Arms. It will be an impartial entity, and I feel we should uphold the institution.

Now the former law officers, military, the staff, they've got experience. The fine men and women who are trying to protect the building are doing a very good job. And I think the Speaker

is in charge of the Chamber.

The government should be putting more resources into Saskatchewan people. That's what the public is saying. So Bill No. 70, *An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly Act, 2007*, we are questioning as to who has been consulted. And in my talks with the fine men and women of the security force in the building and how does it impact the people of the province, they're trying to understand the change and how it would remove nearly all the sergeant's security details and replace them with someone appointed by the minister, minister of the Crown.

Usually the security was non-partisan. They do room checks. Sometimes they walk persons to their cars if they wish, around the building. But we all have family members, Mr. Speaker, loved ones, friends, and constituents who do enter the building, young people, seniors. So we just fail to recognize what is the government trying to say. And I think the government is failing to recognize the important role of the Sergeant-at-Arms and what he plays in defending the democratic institution with his staff.

We feel that this bill crosses right across . . . cuts across the party lines. We'd like a non-partisan, non-partisan staff to oversee us. I don't think we would be independent. And we would be eliminating a long-standing parliamentary custom and tradition which we need and we value and we uphold in the province, Mr. Speaker.

This bill does not recognize the Speaker's valuable and important role in defending the privileges of the Legislative Assembly and its members. What we have now, we value, Mr. Speaker. And we need that bipartisan Board of Internal Economy, which oversees responsibilities of all the parliamentarians for the general administration of the Assembly. There would be less transparency, which the Board of Internal Economy reaffirms — transparency and independence.

So the Saskatchewan people need and respect and have dignity; they have trust for the institution and the governance of what it brings. A lot of the public is asking, what is wrong with what we have?

[14:30]

For example, one evening I was in committee as well as some other staff. And as I was walking out, one of the security staff said, Ms. Wilson, we've got a few rowdy characters out there in the parking lot. Would you like to be escorted out? So of course they were very gracious and I did. Actually the steps were icy too, so they helped me down the steps and they got me to my car. And some of the rowdy bunch respected that I had some security with me. So I know personally it has helped, and I really appreciate the security of the fine men and women.

So if we need more resources, Mr. Speaker, let's get more resources for our current security, as they've been very solid. And it's been close to 40 years. Why do we need a new security force? I don't know. The ministry, the government has not said. And for the record and the history, I believe that this government is overreaching what we need. Most of these former law officers have a lot of experience with the public and the public's social behaviours, so they're able to see some trouble before it even happens.

Now how will this impact the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? Well that's a good question. We have been asking the government and the minister these questions. We still think that separation of state is protecting the integrity and the sanctity of the institution of this building.

I'm not sure even the economic factor. That has not been disclosed in the Assembly — to me at least — of what it's going to cost, the new security versus what we have today. I don't believe it's even been talked about, how many officers or security staff and what happens to the existing security staff.

And as I said, rural Saskatchewan is experiencing a lot of crime. In my area probably once a week a vehicle is driven off from a farmyard. And as much as the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] are trying to do their job, we need more resources in rural Saskatchewan. And so of course the public look to us. Why do the politicians need more security while the public doesn't, and what are the politicians doing that they need more security, which the people are asking me and is probably very valid.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have many, many questions that are yet to be unanswered. I cannot answer them. The government in their wisdom and the Minister of Public Safety and Corrections has to answer these questions and show the trust of the public of what she's trying to do. So, Mr. Speaker, at this time I will ask for leave to adjourn Bill No. 70.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Ms. Wilson: — At this time I move to adjourn Bill 70. Thank you, 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. 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 Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 79, *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act*. Mr. Speaker, this is a new bill. It will serve to create the Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation. This corporation will provide 75 million in loan guarantees and is intended to improve access to capital for Indigenous communities, specifically in the natural resource and value-added agricultural sectors, Mr. Speaker.

This investment in Indigenous-owned companies is one that the

opposition supports, but I would echo the comments of my colleagues who question why this bill is so limited in scope, why it's limited to these two sectors only, Mr. Speaker. You know, the intent behind this bill is certainly one that we support. We're working hard on this side of the House to make investment in Indigenous communities and to urge investment in Indigenous communities and undo the harms of the past, and indeed the ongoing harms, Mr. Speaker. Those efforts include of course the introduction of historic legislation requiring more meaningful duty to consult that was brought forward by the member for Saskatoon Centre.

You know, it's very important to be investing in these kinds of economic opportunities, but there's much more that this government could be doing to support Indigenous communities. And you know, I think of the new SIS program and the housing crisis, Mr. Speaker, and we know that these issues disproportionately impact Indigenous communities, Mr. Speaker.

And I do want to correct one thing that the Minister of Social Services pointed out during question period, when I misspoke and combined the names of RT/SIS and the two tribal councils that it represents — that is, the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, Mr. Speaker, and Touchwood. I combined the Regina treaty status name and those two tribal councils. But I was disappointed to see that it was an excuse for the minister to deflect the question, because these are important questions and they are questions that have particular consequences for Indigenous communities.

So while we look at making economic investments in Indigenous communities, we also have to ensure that we're making social investments in Indigenous communities, Mr. Speaker, because of course they are disproportionately impacted by the social ills that plague this province. They are disproportionately impacted by the failed social programs that we continue to see being rolled out by this government, Mr. Speaker.

I want to echo the remarks of the member from Regina Rosemont, who spoke about all of the good economic work that's being done by Indigenous communities across this province. You know, he mentioned the File Hills Qu'Appelle, Thomas Benjoe, the Prince Albert Grand Council, Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Flying Dust First Nation, Meadow Lake Tribal Council.

And I want to join him in paying a special word to of course Chief Cadmus Delorme, who has done so much for his community, not only in addressing those social ills that I spoke about, the disproportionate representation of children in care in a system that does not see changes in the cycle being broken. You know, as a legal aid lawyer, the first thing I would ask a parent coming into my office who'd had a child apprehended, the first thing I would ask them is how they spent their youth. And nine times out of 10, Mr. Speaker, they had been apprehended by the system as well.

So we have to ask ourselves why these systems aren't working. Of course Cowessess First Nation has stopped asking themselves and taken matters into their own hands, because these are projects that have to be led by Indigenous communities, Mr. Speaker. And so that is one of the issues that we'll be paying close attention to as we scrutinize this bill, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that these

initiatives are Indigenous-led initiatives and that they are leading this process. We don't want this bill to just be another example of this government paying lip service to these issues without meaningful initiatives.

I know that the critic is fully engaged in reviewing this bill, Mr. Speaker. I would just send the message as far as I can that stakeholders, Indigenous communities, leaders should be in touch with this opposition as we scrutinize this bill because it is our intention to ensure that we get this right, Mr. Speaker. So with that I am pleased to adjourn debate on Bill No. 79, *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 80

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

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it's a pleasure to again be on my feet to join in debate on Bill No. 80, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2022*. Mr. Speaker, this bill is one that creates a single innovation agency by moving the Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation, SOCO [Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation], under the authority of Innovation Saskatchewan.

With that, this bill would see a transfer from CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] oversight to IS [Innovation Saskatchewan] oversight, Mr. Speaker. And I understand that the stated goal of this legislation is for there to be a single point of contact for stakeholders to help grow the tech sector over the next decade and really to streamline services for research and development.

I had an opportunity to be on my feet yesterday, Mr. Speaker, to speak a bit about the tech sector and its success in this province. I spoke a bit about my personal connection to seeing that sector succeed. And you know, I can't overstate the need to support these kinds of initiatives in coming to Saskatchewan because, as we know, a resilient economy is a diversified economy, Mr. Speaker. But we cannot attract these new sectors if we don't have sufficiently supported education systems, health care systems, child care, cost of living, affordability, access to housing, all of these issues that allow people to envision a future for themselves in this province.

And of course, after 14 years of Sask Party policy, what we're seeing right now is some of the highest rates of out-migration. Highest rates of out-migration. Some of the lowest growth rates, Mr. Speaker. And I know that I keep harping on about this, but that number is particularly acute when we look at young people,

age 18 to 25. Age 18 to 25, those people increasingly do not see a future for themselves here in Saskatchewan, and they are the future of all of our sectors, Mr. Speaker. And if that isn't an indictment of the policies that this government has been pursuing, I don't know what is.

We need to ensure that all areas of this province are thriving, Mr. Speaker, so that we continue to attract people, and then when they get here, we ensure that they foresee a long-term future for themselves in this great province, Mr. Speaker.

I know that our critic will be engaged on this front. I know that they are reaching out to stakeholders so that we can ensure that this bill is addressing the issues in the best way possible. And we will watch that on this side with great interest, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, it's my pleasure to adjourn debate on Bill No. 80, *The Innovation Saskatchewan 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.

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 Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join on Bill No. 81. Initially I asked the critic a little bit about this bill. And I'm hoping at the end of the day, when the time is right, those individuals who have had concerns and issues with the legislation that's being proposed here, that they have been consulted to make sure that this legislation coming forward is exactly what's needed to help.

When we're looking at jobs, when we're looking at . . . You know, we have such areas where we have such shortage of doctors, nurses. There's a list goes on of, you know, just so many skilled workers, trades. There's many places where we're having lots of issues.

And I think many of us on this side of the House have, in question period and in different parts . . . We've heard from employers, big employers and stuff, so let's hope. We're hoping — and I talked to the critic a little bit about this — hoping that this government has done its due diligence to make sure they're consulting with individuals that would be impacted and industry and organizations to make sure they get it right. We want to make sure they get it right.

[14:45]

The only thing I did notice, and any time I see something like this happening . . . And I'm not saying I understand it all. And I'm going to let the critic ask some tough questions in committee

before, you know, this comes into effect and becomes the law. Anytime you have . . . giving powers to a minister, I always pay attention to that. When you take legislation and you allow a minister to have the authority or to do certain changes, any time I see that, it's almost like to me, we want to pay close attention.

I know my colleagues do. We pay close attention to that because you're wondering, okay, if it was a different way of doing it, if it's a new bill, still, any time you give the minister the power to be able to do certain things — just rather than going through the process, regulations, and stuff like that, if they can just change it — we want to make sure we understand what they're saying in this piece of legislation, exactly those powers, what powers are they going to be given to, and what it is.

So I know my colleague will have lots of questions. And the critic will ask what needs to be done on this bill and exactly why, who they consulted with. Is this the right way? Is this the bill that's needed? Will it make sure we're dealing with the situation so we don't have, all of a sudden, you know, another amendment shortly after?

So just my initial comments, again like I say, again are concerning just the wording when it says "the minister." So I'm hoping, and I know my colleague — we've talked — will ask more questions. And more of my colleagues will have things to say on this bill before, you know, it goes to committee. So at this time, I'm prepared to adjourn on Bill 81.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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 Saskatoon Fairview.

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Normally I say it's my pleasure to enter into debate on a bill. It is not my pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 82, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2022*. We have a set of Finance bills that came out attached to the budget, Mr. Speaker. And you know, we're talking about . . . We went through the budget and added up 32 new taxes and fees that are being applied to the people of this province at a time where our natural resource revenues are increasing, where our economy is starting to bounce back. The people of this province are the ones who are still footing the bills, and it's completely unfair.

And the justification that was provided for some of these tax increases by the Minister of Finance was that we needed these increases in taxes to pay for the surgical waits. And, Mr. Speaker, we know that there was \$20 million being allocated toward the surgical initiative — at least they said that — \$20 million that they said was also going to go towards surgeries last year, \$20 million that they also said was going to go towards surgeries

the year before that, Mr. Speaker. But when the Minister of Finance found out that the federal government was actually going to be providing us with \$62 million to address surgical backlogs, she wouldn't retract these 32 additional taxes and fees. So her justification does not seem to add up.

And what I'll say is that what this means for people in the real world, everyday folks, is that we're seeing inflation go up. Cost of living is going up. We know that the costs of food are increasing. I cannot believe the amount of money that I spend on food for myself and my partner, and we don't even have children, Mr. Speaker. The cost of food is outrageous, and we know that these costs are impacting individual people. When all the costs are going up but your wages don't go up at the same rate, that creates a situation where people are having to make very difficult choices moving forward about what they have to sacrifice in their families. And we're not seeing this government caring about that, taking note about that, and providing that relief.

And one of the big issues that we have seen is the increase in fuel costs as well, Mr. Speaker. I cannot believe how much it costs me to gas up my vehicle now. And I know that for so many folks, you know, if you're out on the farm as well, or if you're commuting, the amount of money that you have to spend gassing up your vehicle is outrageous. And I think it can be easy for members of this Assembly to forget that because due to our jobs, we end up travelling quite a bit, but we are able to be compensated for mileage. And that's simply not the case for so many folks across the province who are commuting or doing their daily work.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're not in favour of adding additional taxes and fees to the people of this province. I don't think it's the right time. I think this government presents itself as being quite conservative, and yet what we see is just additional taxes, added deficit, added debt, and still not adequate social services, public services to provide for the people of this province. I know we'll have more to say about this bill, Mr. Speaker, but with that, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 82.

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 Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure this afternoon to rise and enter into second reading debates on this Bill No. 83, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act of 2022*.

Much like members on this side have noted, this is one of a series of bills attached to the most recent budget, Mr. Speaker, and attached to the long list of fee and tax hikes that we saw that

really, really characterized this 2022 budget, Mr. Speaker, a budget that came at a time when so many families in this province are feeling not only the burden and the stress of having come through — or not quite through, Mr. Deputy Speaker — a global pandemic, but also the stress of economic insecurity over the last two years for so many families, as well as record 30-year inflation rates that we're seeing in the province right now, and to be fair, not just in the province, in the country.

You know, I have had opportunity to be on the road a little more than be up on second reading debates, but one of the things that is really uniform, something I hear in every community that I've been out in, is just this feeling of feeling pinched. We know that most households in this province make under \$70,000 a year. And you know, there's been much made recently of, you know, cost-of-living increases for different folks, including members of this Assembly, you know, to keep pace.

There are a lot of folks whose wage increases have simply not kept pace with the cost of living, and certainly are not keeping pace with the cost of living right now. When you see — and I haven't looked at the most recent numbers — but a 30 per cent increase to fuel costs alone, that is a burden that frankly most families cannot bear.

I know even before the pandemic, you know, you get up on these second reading bills and you think of some of the things that you've heard and you've talked about in the Assembly. One of them was that Saskatchewan ranked highest on the number of families surveyed who said, if they had an extra bill of \$200 at the end of the month, that they felt it would be a burden, that it would be stressful for them to be able to pay that. Mr. Speaker, that was before the pandemic.

The other one that I think of here as well is the number of people in the province, the percentage of people who have their mortgage in arrears. And I believe that that was defined as mortgages that haven't been paid for more than four months. Mr. Speaker, as someone who is looking at the expiration of our mortgage at our house and noting, you know, the increase of 1 per cent to the rate that we're paying on that mortgage, that's difficult for families with above that \$70,000-a-year income, Mr. Speaker. But that's going to make the difference for many families in this province between whether they can pay their mortgage at the end of the month or not. And again, this is something that we already had rates that were three times the national average before this, Mr. Speaker.

The cost of groceries, of course, is something that you hear in every community. You know, people have growing families, having . . . We've got one of our children out of the house, but still have two at home. Even with, you know, brothers and a father who's a hunter and often fill our deep-freeze with meat, the cost of groceries is noticeable when you go to pick up groceries.

And again, you know, for those families who are making \$70,000 a year or less, sometimes working two and three jobs trying to pay those things, before the pandemic was really, really hard. But right now it's a burden that families are simply not able . . . I've heard from people who are saying, you know, they pay their power bill one month and then they pay their energy bill the next month because they simply can't afford to pay them both, which

of course causes increases to interest that they're paying and all sorts of issues.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say all of that as preamble to this. When this budget came out, this 2022 budget, there was some expectations — some hopes for sure, but almost expectations — that there would be some measure of relief for Saskatchewan families who are struggling so much just to pay the bills, to make ends meet, Mr. Speaker. And I think that was really bolstered in the months leading up to the budget when we saw, for really extraordinary world event reasons, an increase to the price of potash, for example.

You know, we got some snow, which was great. You know, there's a bit of a rosier picture hopefully for most producers, most areas of this province with the snow that we've got. Hopefully not too much that we get flooding, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And of course, the price of oil and gas having risen. I believe it's \$1.9 billion alone in increased potash royalties, for example. There was a real hope, expectation, and frankly need for a measure of relief in this budget. But that's not what we saw here.

Now specifically to the bill that I am speaking to, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker, it is but one. And let me be on the record as being in favour of doing what we can to reduce rates of tobacco consumption. I say that as a teenager who struggled with smoking, and as a mom of three who wants none of my children to smoke. And on a sadder note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the mom of three kids who didn't get to know one grandma because of smoking, and lost one very, very . . . a step-grandma to smoking-related cancer way too young.

So let me be on the record there that it is not specifically the tobacco tax that I have an issue with, but I do have an issue with the list, the litany really of increased fees and taxes that we see in this budget. Mr. Speaker, there is a whole page here. I may for brevity's sake not go through all of them, but I want to highlight some of them.

Agricultural property tax, residential property tax, commercial and industrial property tax, resource property tax. Mr. Speaker, education property tax, up across the board, yet . . . And again, this is where I dared to hope that we would actually see an investment, the investment that our kids need in education in this budget. But we didn't even see that, Mr. Speaker. It's more than disappointing.

[15:00]

In addition, of course, you know, like everyone else we're looking forward to getting out this summer, to going to the lake, to meeting with people, to getting out and doing some of the things that frankly have not felt safe or possible over the last two years.

And you think of some of the businesses that were most impacted over the last two years. You know, gyms were shut down for a long time. I've got a young football player in my basement who tells me . . . He could probably tell me how many weeks the gyms were closed. Came home and, you know, wanted to talk to me about politics, wanted to talk about this fee on the gym, because everyone at the gym was talking about it, Mr. Speaker. This, you know, made his mama's heart proud in terms of, you know, him

wanting to come and talk about something in my realm, but did not make those other folks who he's going to the gym with very happy. And certainly the owners of those gyms, not very happy at all, Mr. Speaker.

We look at rates of mental health. You know, this is one of the ways that this needs to be . . . You know, exercise is a great way for people to be able to, you know, improve their mental health. There is a huge story to be told here, Mr. Speaker. But what did these guys do? They slapped a tax on it.

What else did they slap a tax on? Well if you want to think of anything fun that you might have wanted to do this summer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's probably on the list. We talk of movie theatres, museums, zoos, historical sites. A shout-out to Cannington Manor down in the Southeast, Mr. Speaker, one of my favourites as a kid. Some of these things are going to cost you more: fairs; rodeos, Mr. Speaker; trade shows; arts and crafts shows; conferences and seminars. Gym memberships, as I said. Even golf memberships, there's an increase.

Mr. Speaker, speaking of, you know, hunting fees, hunting guides and fishing guides, so most guides in this province drive, you know, probably . . . Well I don't want to get brand-specific, but you think of . . . My dad's an outfitter, happens to drive an F-150, 130-litre tank. You want to put gas in that tank today, it's going to cost you \$230 which, you know, as an outfitter you have to eat some of these costs. You haven't seen your hunters for two years in some cases. But now these guys are going to slap another tax in front of that. So either you're going to pass it on to the folks coming up here and hope they still come or you're going to eat it as an outfitter, Mr. Speaker. And these are concerns that we're hearing in every community around this province.

So I'm trying to get some clues from my colleagues on this side, Mr. Speaker. We could go on and on. So I'll wrap it up very quickly here. On one hand, tobacco tax, not really the issue, Mr. Speaker, but this budget and its 32 fee and tax hikes, Mr. Speaker, the exact wrong budget at the exact wrong time for the people of Saskatchewan.

With that, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 83.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 84

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

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I feel like these bills all kind of follow the same theme, which is kicking people when they're down, Mr. Speaker. People are struggling

financially across this province, and this government's response is to add the PST [provincial sales tax] onto everything in sight. This particular bill expands the PST to include admissions, entertainment, and recreation charges as of October 1st, 2022 and to services provided by credit rating agencies effective April 1st, 2022. We do not support the expansion of the PST. If anything, we're hoping to see the PST scrapped on construction labour, on kids' clothes, on restaurant meals, everything that has become more expensive.

You think about restaurants, Mr. Speaker; this is a very hard-hit industry during the pandemic. It's something that's near and dear to my heart, as Saskatoon often boasts to be a community with one of the most restaurants per capita in Canada. I don't know if that's currently true, but it's something I've heard in the past, Mr. Speaker. And we have so many great restaurants that dining out is such a pleasure, and is such a great opportunity to connect with friends and family and such a big part of our culture here. So adding PST onto restaurant meals was a mistake, and it should be, that should be removed.

And instead what we're seeing from government is adding PST onto fun. This should be called the anti-fun bill. They're adding a PST onto fun, everything from sporting events, Mr. Speaker . . . Over the weekend I was at the Rush game. I like to attend sporting events from time to time like many people in this Assembly and across the province. There have been issues with making sure that we can safely fill our sporting arenas. I know for some time, they were operating at 50 per cent capacity. And I know that we want people to be able to safely engage in these activities again.

And we have to figure out what the . . . If this is what's normal now, we have to figure out what the new normal looks like in a way that's actually going to support these industries. And instead of supporting these industries, we are slapping a tax on everything that is fun in this province: sporting events, concerts, shows, movie theatres, museums, zoos, historical sites, fairs, rodeos, trade shows, arts and craft shows, conferences, seminars, professional theatre tickets, gym memberships, golf memberships, curling fees — that's something I find particularly fun, Mr. Speaker . . .

An Hon. Member: — Even curling?

Ms. Mowat: — Even curling. Hunting guides and fishing guides. Mr. Speaker, I don't know what else to say. Why? Why are they bringing in this PST? This used to be a party that would talk about unfairly taxing the people of this province. They've lost their way. They're not in touch with the people of this province anymore.

We don't support this bill. With that, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 84.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In order to facilitate committee later on this afternoon, I move that we do now adjourn the Assembly.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:08.]

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