



SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

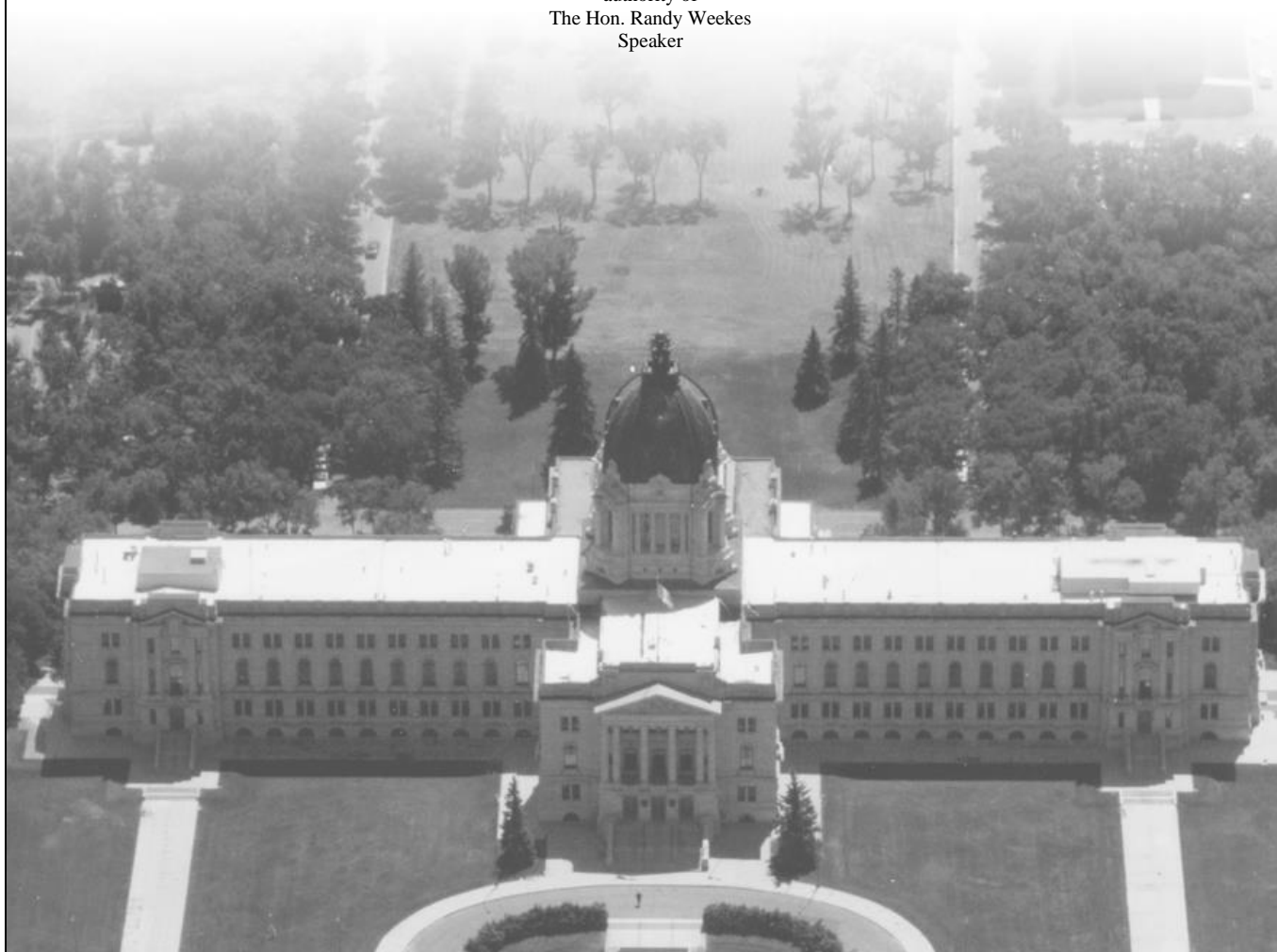
of the

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

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Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)
Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)
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Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)
Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP)

Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)
Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)
McLeod, Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)
McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
Meili, Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)
Meyers, Derek — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)
Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)
Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)
Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP)
Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)
Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)
Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)
Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
Skoropad, Dana — Arm River (SP)
Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Stewart, Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (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 Burianyk

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Mr. Jensen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you this afternoon, seated in your gallery are three physicians from my community of Martensville-Warman. I've got with us today Dr. Adamus, Dr. Smit, and Dr. Okunola. And they're joined this afternoon by some representatives from the city of Martensville and the city of Warman as well as some constituents that have also made the trip down this afternoon to join us here in the Chamber. So with that I'd like all members of this Assembly to welcome them to their Saskatchewan legislature.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in with the member opposite in welcoming this delegation to their legislature here today. I know that they have some questions for government. I look forward to going through that process here today. And they came with a large stack of petitions as well, so we look forward to having some time to chat further. But I would like to welcome this group, as well as the physicians who are with them and the city councillors who are with them, to this their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Justice minister.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, in your gallery I'd like to introduce a very good friend of mine, Rick Schuler. He's here to observe question period, Mr. Speaker. Rick and his brother Brent own and operate Pow City Mechanical in Saskatoon. It's a company that was started by their father, Ralph. They're the proud employer of over 200 employees, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud to say that, given the strength of our economy, they're looking for more, Mr. Speaker.

They work on projects all over Saskatchewan. This is a great example, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon of a family-run business that contributes so much, not just to the province, but to the great city of Saskatoon and the fabric of our community. Rick and his family are great community supporters of a great number of community endeavours, and we're very proud to have them in the city of Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Rick's bride, Connie. She's an accomplished landscape artist, Mr. Speaker, done some just wonderful, beautiful work that's available for people to have a look at on her website, Mr. Speaker. So I wanted to acknowledge her as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of the legislature to welcome Rick to his Assembly.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. To you, through you, and to all members, I would like to welcome my constituents Jenny Tait; her mother, Kathy Mahar; her father, Brad Tait, and his partner, Lori Dyck; Jenny's brother-in-law Curtis Taylor; and Jenny's niece Neve Taylor.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be reading a member's statement thanking Jenny for her professionalism and bravery on the night of December 13th, 2017. I ask all members to join me in welcoming Jenny and her family to their legislature.

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you it is my pleasure to introduce a group of grade 9 students. There are 13 of them here in the west gallery from Swanson Christian School in Delisle, Saskatchewan. Welcome. With them today is their teacher Lacey Hiebert, and their chaperones are Ken and Michelle Klassen.

I look forward to having the opportunity to speak with you after the proceedings today and having a discussion on what you see here today. Your MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], Minister Reiter, was . . . excuse me, the minister . . . Rosetown, was unable to be here this afternoon, so I'm bringing greetings on his behalf. And I look forward to seeing you, and welcome to your Assembly today.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to welcome a school group to the Assembly today. It's folks that I know. I know many of these young people's parents and families as well. And these are 49 grade 7s, St. Francis Firebirds, Mr. Speaker, and it's a pleasure to have them here today. They're joined by their incredible teachers Mr. Zylak and Ms. Wasyliw. I look forward to meeting with them after question period here today.

And they came a little bit early here today, so they had some time in that beautiful day outside in the park. I had the pleasure of joining them out to play a little football, Mr. Speaker. I quarterbacked my side to victory, Mr. Speaker. I quarterbacked both sides — started with a pick. Members opposite know that never happens in question period, Mr. Speaker. But then we got around to getting some TDs [touchdown] into the end zone, Mr. Speaker.

I want to welcome these very special guests to their Assembly, these leaders of tomorrow. And I look forward to meeting with them after question period.

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

Mr. Friesen: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all the members of this Assembly, I had the privilege, along with some of our colleagues, to be part of a mock parliament today. And there was some guests here today that were part of that, and it was really awesome being part of it and a spectator here. And I really hope you enjoyed it, Mr. Speaker. You were a part of it as well. So welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in with the member opposite in welcoming these guests back to their Legislative Assembly, the teachers who are participating in the SSTI [Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy] program.

Thanks for spending a few days here learning about how this space works and how government functions or doesn't function. And it was a pleasure to watch you sitting in these seats going back and forth today as well. And just thanks for the leadership you're providing in your communities, in your classrooms, and for your dedication in coming here. I'd ask all members to join in welcoming these guests back to their Assembly today.

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 as it relates to Bill 70, Mr. Speaker, a bill that was brought forward for no good reason, Mr. Speaker, and a bill that represents a political and a partisan takeover of the very important duties of the Sergeant-at-Arms in this Assembly, the security of this building, and the independence of that very important function, Mr. Speaker.

Of course this breaks with parliamentary precedent and custom from across Canada, in legislatures across Canada and the parliament as well, Mr. Speaker. It guts the powers and duties of the Sergeant-at-Arms. And it takes away, Mr. Speaker, that important responsibility in reporting to you, Mr. Speaker, and the independence that that provides all that interact with this building, Mr. Speaker: journalists, staff, MLAs, students, concerned citizens, all that would interact with this legislation, Mr. Speaker. It's clear in this case that the government is putting their partisan and political interests ahead of the public's interest.

And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to stop the passage of Bill 70,

The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 2021.

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

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and present a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to fix the crisis in our classrooms. Mr. Speaker, those who had signed this petition, one of many similar petitions over the last number of years, were hoping to see some relief in this most recent budget, some supports for students who have found their last three school years disrupted by COVID-19, but also to undo the damage of years of underfunding and cuts that this government has brought for education.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, we saw a budget allocation that didn't even fully fund the teachers' contract, that didn't account for pension and payroll increases, didn't have any measure to deal with record inflation, insurance, let alone to provide any relief to children in classrooms who really desperately need it at this time, Mr. Speaker.

They wanted us to know that the Sask Party government's cuts leave educators and support staff without the resources they need to support a pandemic recovery, and that this underfunding will continue to have impact, not only today but 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 the petition today reside in Regina. 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 to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to immediately recruit and retain family doctors in Martensville and Warman. Large stack of petitions here today, along with folks here who delivered these petitions.

These citizens wish to bring to our attention that together, the cities of Warman and Martensville are home to 24,843 people; that there are currently less than 10 family doctors between the two cities who are expected to serve the populations of Warman, Martensville, and surrounding areas; that cities of similar population size have nearly double the amount of family doctors and at least one publicly funded health centre, which both Warman and Martensville are still without, regardless of their population; that Martensville and Warman do not receive proportionate health care funding in infrastructure appropriate to their population size because government has not considered the region urban, regional, or rural; and that Martensville and

Warman are considered excluded communities for all return-of-service agreements.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately recruit and retain family doctors in Martensville and Warman, and immediately remove the two communities from the list of excluded communities for all return-of-service agreements.

This petition today is signed by individuals from Martensville and Warman primarily, but also communities of Hague, Osler, Hepburn, Saskatoon. I had to stop counting because we ran out of time and I came to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise once again today to present our petition calling for paid sick leave legislation in Saskatchewan. The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: a healthy workforce is good for the economy; lives could be saved if workers could afford to stay home when they're sick, Mr. Speaker.

We know that workplaces have been a major source of transmission throughout the pandemic and a health and safety concern to workers. No one should have to make the choice between going to work sick or risking the roof over their head by staying home. Workers, doctors, and public health officials have all called for paid sick leave in Saskatchewan. And the official opposition has now twice introduced paid sick leave legislation since the onset of the pandemic, calling for a minimum of 10 paid sick days each year as well as 14 days during a public health crisis, Mr. Speaker.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to introduce and pass paid sick leave legislation without further delay.

Mr. Speaker, today the petition has been signed by residents of Perdue and Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present the following petition. The folks who signed this petition wish to bring your attention the following: we only have 10 per cent of Crown land left; this government has been auctioning off Crown land and leases to the highest bidder. They haven't meaningfully consulted with impacted communities. They are leaving the taxpayers of this province footing the bills for its mistakes and losses in courts.

[13:45]

They're breaching the treaty relationship and restricting access

to traditional hunting, fishing, trapping, and medicine picking.

And the provincial government must immediately stop selling off Crown land and leases and fix their broken duty-to-consult process. I will also be tabling this letter from Kahkewistahaw regarding this government's failed duty-to-consult process.

I'll read the prayer:

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

The folks who signed this petition reside in Moose Jaw and Regina. I do so present. miigwech.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Mental Health Week

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. May 2nd to 8th is national Mental Health Week. We would like to recognize this week as addressing mental health issues are a priority for our government.

This is why we've invested over \$92 million in targeted mental health and addictions funding since this Premier took his seat. This includes \$8 million in the 2022-23 budget for mental health initiatives such as \$1 million to support province-wide implementation of the mental health and addictions information system and an expansion of the mental health capacity building in schools program to additional schools throughout the province with \$800,000 in new funding. The new There is Help, There is Hope public awareness campaign aims to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health challenges.

Since 2015 more than 50 actions have been implemented from the mental health and addictions action plan. Further to these investments, this year we are continuing to provide funding of \$1 million for a suicide prevention plan, Pillars for Life. This brings our total investment in the plan to \$3.24 million in its first three budget years.

While we know there is much to do, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to doing the work and ensuring we are doing everything we can to tackle the mental health challenges we face in this province. And to the people out there, please know we are working hard for you. We care. And we will continue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Flight Attendant's Bravery during Aircraft Emergency

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be on my feet again to recognize a young Métis woman from my constituency, Jenny Tait. Jenny was a flight attendant on West

Wind Flight 280 that crashed near the Fond-du-Lac airport on December 13th, 2017.

Shortly after the aircraft was in the air, Jenny could feel the aircraft shudder, then seconds later it crashed. The impact ripped Jenny's seat from the wall and sent her into the galley. The aircraft came to a stop on its right side. Passengers were screaming and they were injured. Those on board were unable to access the emergency exits. Jenny saw a cargo door and asked others to help her dislodge the door open.

Mr. Speaker, Jenny used her own body as a cushion so passengers could jump down, not hurt themselves, and seek safety. Jenny remained in the aircraft to free those still trapped in the aircraft that was rapidly leaking fuel. Mr. Speaker, after the Canadian Rangers and the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] arrived, Jenny didn't want to leave the scene, knowing passengers were still trapped in the aircraft, even though she herself was badly injured.

I ask all members to rise and join me in thanking Jenny Tait for her brave actions on the night of December 13th, 2017. miigwech.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

New Community Centre to Open in Kinistino

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, those of us who grew up in small-town Saskatchewan understand the importance of a community centre and the vital role it plays in keeping community relationships strong. After years of events like banquets and graduation ceremonies being held in other towns and cities, the town of Kinistino will officially have their own facility.

The new structure is being constructed on the site of the former Kinistino Legion building. The centre is projected to cost \$6.6 million. Alongside a significant donation from a private donor, funding for the project will include partnerships between federal, provincial, and municipal governments.

Mr. Speaker, the project is set to be completed by the end of September this year. Once completed, the centre will include a town office, a commercial kitchen, a main hall with a performance stage, and another room that can be used by members of the Royal Canadian Legion.

I would ask that all members join me in congratulating the town of Kinistino on their new community centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatoon Firefighters Hold Fundraiser for Sister City in Ukraine

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to thank the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 80 for organizing the Unite for Ukraine fundraiser luncheon in support of the residents of Chernivtsi, Ukraine and to thank all of those who have contributed to this important humanitarian cause.

In 1991 Saskatoon and Chernivtsi formalized a relationship as sister cities based on their shared characteristics, as well as the cultural ties that connect many residents of Saskatchewan to the people of Ukraine. When the mayor of Chernivtsi reached out to Charlie Clark for assistance during the ongoing humanitarian crisis, IAFF [International Association of Fire Fighters] Local 80 was among the first to answer the call. As front-line responders, these workers understand the importance of swift, collective action in times of crisis.

While we may be separated from the people of Ukraine by distance, we are brought together by compassion and solidarity. The efforts of the organizers and the generosity of all those who have contributed to this cause are proof that the Saskatchewan spirit of coming together during times of hardship is not only reserved for our nearest neighbours, but extends to our neighbours across the world.

Proceeds from the fundraiser held today will be used to purchase supplies for displaced people in Chernivtsi, Mr. Speaker, and I encourage members to make a donation at uniteforukraine.ca. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Outlook Wrestler Wins Provincial High School Championship

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've often said that the strength of Saskatchewan lives in our youth. Grade 11 student Taebyn Tulp from Outlook literally took my statement to the wrestling mat several weeks ago in Saskatoon. Competing in the 60-kilogram weight division at the SHSAA [Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association] provincial wrestling championship earlier in March, Ms. Tulp put her skill and strength on full display as she captured the gold medal with an astonishing performance.

Mr. Speaker, over the course of the competition, Taebyn, she put impressive stats up on the board, but most impressive of all would be the number zero. That is, Mr. Speaker, zero is the number of points scored against her as she wrestled her way to the provincial title.

Taebyn's accomplishments, well they're truly a testament to her grit. Since she was seven years of age, Taebyn has dedicated herself to the sport of wrestling under the tutelage of her coach and her dad, Lloyd Tulp. Currently Taebyn's training extends to the University of Saskatchewan, where she works with the Huskie wrestling team up to five days a week.

Mr. Speaker, talking to Taebyn, one quickly learns that her most remarkable attribute, well it isn't her strength, stamina, or speed. No, Mr. Speaker, it is the humble heart of a champion which Taebyn possesses that makes her so extraordinary. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to help me to congratulate provincial wrestling champion Taebyn Tulp and recognize a rising star in Saskatchewan.

Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Kisbey Church Holds Fundraiser for Ukrainian Families

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Kisbey United Church held an annual auction in their community. The money traditionally goes towards the church or various missions throughout the years. This year, Mr. Speaker, the church members decided to put the funds raised towards Ukrainian families in need. The auction took place on April 8th, and many auction items were donated by donors in the area right up until the last minute.

There is a family from Ukraine that lives in Kisbey that immigrated to the village over a decade ago. Svitlana Makar was interviewed and explained the worry that the war in Ukraine has created within her family, as it would be for so many Canadian Ukrainian families. She explained that her parents did not leave. They were helping displaced people in Ukraine.

Mrs. Makar spoke at the auction. She said that she is so happy to be in a community that is so caring and helpful, and told the crowd that if they cannot donate, to share their prayers for the people of Ukraine as that will help as well.

Once the auction was complete, the Kisbey United Church had raised over \$10,000 for the Ukrainian families in need, Mr. Speaker. This to me, Mr. Speaker, is another true reflection of what Saskatchewan people do. Thank you.

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

New Chief Executive Officer of Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce has announced their new chief executive officer. Mr. Speaker, Prabha Ramaswamy, who's no stranger to members of this legislature, who many describe as a champion of Saskatchewan business and a passionate community leader, will now lead that organization.

Since 2014 Prabha's been the CEO [chief executive officer] of the non-profit organization Women Entrepreneurs Saskatchewan. Well with that organization, among many other initiatives, Mr. Speaker, Prabha launched Matchstick. It was the very first program in Western Canada to support Indigenous women entrepreneurs. Mr. Speaker, Prabha also serves on the board of directors of the Saskatchewan housing authority, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, and Hope Restored Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan should be very excited to have such a talented, dedicated, and community-minded leader to help guide business in this province. This government fully agrees with Prabha when she says that Saskatchewan has what the world needs and is well positioned to be a leader in business and competitive opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, this side of the House is very excited, Mr. Speaker, to see more women get involved in the economy and develop their businesses. Mr. Speaker, let's continue to see the gender entrepreneurship gap in Saskatchewan close and more women participating in the strongest business ecosystem in Canada right

here in the great province of Saskatchewan.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Prabha on her new position with the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Management of the Provincial Economy

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While other provinces and territories saw their GDPs [gross domestic product] bounce back, in most cases by 5 to 9 per cent, Saskatchewan's economy shrunk this past year. It's the only place in Canada for that to happen. Now the Premier is trying to paint this as an outlier, but it's the third year in a row under his leadership that Saskatchewan's economy contracted. In fact, under the Sask Party, our GDP has declined in five of the last seven years. By the end of 2021, our economy was as small as it was in 2013.

The worst COVID response in the country, the worst population growth in the country, and the worst economic performance in the entire country by far. What does such a dismal performance say about this Premier's priorities?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, you know, much of that just isn't the case. And we see the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, and this is a testament again to the fact that the NDP [New Democratic Party] just simply don't change. The Leader of the Opposition again is running down Saskatchewan, in this case actually specifically running down rural Saskatchewan and the agriculture industry, Mr. Speaker.

As I indicated yesterday, it didn't rain last year in Saskatchewan. There was a significant drought. Understanding the importance of agriculture to our GDP, to our economy here in the province, Mr. Speaker, there was a reduction this past year. As I said yesterday, if the production was the same as the year previous, we would have had a three and a half per cent growth here in the province.

And as you look ahead in Saskatchewan, four and a half per cent is the projection next year by all of the major financial institutions. That puts us second in the nation, Mr. Speaker. The year after that, in 2023, again ranked second with a 3 per cent growth rate. With all of the investments that we are seeing landing in community after community across this province, Mr. Speaker, there are great opportunities ahead for Saskatchewan people and all those that are soon to be Saskatchewan people.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, "if wishes were horses" is the saying that comes to mind. Somebody who's counting on people's spending predictions and failing to recognize his own record, his own failures.

Part of that economic decline, part of that failure under this Premier has been the struggle of businesses in sports, in culture

and entertainment. This Premier had already hurt construction and restaurants by slapping the PST [provincial sales tax] on those industries. Now he's hurting concert venues and sports teams.

Last night he ignored the quotes from REAL [Regina Exhibition Association Ltd.], ignored the quotes from the Riders, couldn't give us a single reason why he chose to make it harder for those industries to bounce back. Why does the Premier not care about the impact of his choices? Why is he making it harder for businesses to recover? Why is he making life more expensive at a time when Saskatchewan people need relief?

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is quite likely that if the Leader of the Opposition had his way, as we discussed yesterday, those very businesses would be still shut down, Mr. Speaker. They wouldn't be open for business in any way.

Mr. Speaker, to go to the preamble of that question, if you turn to page 33 of the 2022-23 budget documents that were introduced in this House just about a month ago, and you look under the year 2021, there's some reference to some Statistics Canada numbers. And the real GDP in this province during the year of 2021 is up three and a half per cent. That's growth of three and a half per cent here in the province, forecast for 3.7 next year, and continuing on growth into the future, Mr. Speaker.

With the investments that we are seeing in this province, Mr. Speaker, I'd put forward that as we look into the future, we're going to see yet increased growth as future budgets come out.

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

Support for Health Care

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard the Minister of Health say from his seat just now that StatsCan is wrong, and that seems to be what the Premier is saying. What the Premier is saying is that reality is not in favour of his spin, and so he's going to stick with spin. That is the way he approaches things.

And nothing says, nothing says "I don't care" like pretending things are fine in the middle of a crisis. We heard nothing last night that would suggest that this Premier even knows that our emergency rooms are bursting at the seams. But this morning in Saskatoon, 68 patients sitting in the emergency room who were admitted but didn't have a bed on the ward — 68. This is completely unsustainable.

Doctors are burnt-out. Their mental health is suffering. Premier, what does he have to say? Nothing but spin. No acknowledgement of that crisis. The provincial head of medicine, he told the *StarPhoenix* that our hospitals are in "a circle of dysfunction." He said that we are failing.

Will the Premier, will the Premier acknowledge that this is an emergency situation? Will he take action to expand primary care, increase in-hospital capacity, take the pressure off our emerg, and

support these doctors so that more of them don't pack up and leave the province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, actually yesterday as we had some period of time together to discuss a number of issues — not all of the issues pertinent to Saskatchewan people but a number of issues — one of those was health care. And I went through in great detail what we are doing to support our front-line health care workers in this province, what we have done. And the models that have worked, we're replicating here now, Mr. Speaker.

For example, we are increasing our training seats for nurses here in the province now up to 1,000 training seats available in the province, Mr. Speaker. We've increased the training seats for our physicians. We're looking at what we have had success with in the past in recruiting, for example, physicians into the province with what was the Physician Recruitment Agency of Saskatchewan, morphed into Saskdocs. Take that success. Refocus that effort, Mr. Speaker, so that it is not just recruiting physicians but recruiting all of our medical health care professionals into this province. We very much have a strong record when it comes to recruitment and retention of medical health care professionals: 1,000 more doctors working in the province; 4,200 more nurses, Mr. Speaker.

We understand today that we need more yet. Our work is not finished, Mr. Speaker. That's why we have a four-point plan. That's why we are going to double down our efforts to ensure that we are bringing back the services in the few communities across this province that might have some disruptions temporarily, Mr. Speaker. And we will be bringing those back. Redvers is back online as we speak. A number of others will be in the days ahead.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to this and we are committed to also expanding our care in our urban centres. Six more ICU [intensive care unit] beds were announced just two days ago, Mr. Speaker. More to come in the future.

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

Recruitment and Retention of Doctors in Martensville and Warman

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Twenty per cent of Saskatchewan physicians contemplating retiring in the next two years and directly attributing that to the lack of respect they've received from this government.

Some of those doctors, some of those primary care doctors have joined us today. We're joined by Dr. Allison Adamus, Dr. Lanre Okunola, Dr. Marcel Smit, along with community members and city councillors from Martensville and Warman, the communities that these doctors serve. They're trying to provide great care to their community. They're trying to take care of their patients. That's all they want to do. That's all they want to do, but they simply can't keep up.

Clinics in towns like Martensville and Warman are under incredible pressure. Can't meet the care needs of the community.

And their patients wind up frustrated, and they wind up in our already overcrowded Saskatoon emergency rooms.

They've raised this with the minister; they've raised this with their local MLA. But they haven't seen any action.

Will the Premier stop, will the Premier stop pretending everything is fine and listen to these doctors, listen to these community leaders, and take action now to create the . . . to fix the mess that he has created in Saskatchewan health care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the doctors and the community members for coming down to their Legislative Assembly.

I had the opportunity on Friday to meet with Dr. Smit and Dr. Ness to be able to discuss this exact issue that they're having in Martensville and Warman, Mr. Speaker. What we decided at that meeting is I would go back to my officials, be able to have a discussion on what we can do.

They've talked to me about some of the numbers that they're experiencing, the pressure that they're seeing. They've seen some doctors exit for various reasons, Mr. Speaker.

But we're going to work with the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] to be able to make sure that we can complement the doctors, work with the four-point plan on the longer term issues, Mr. Speaker, to be able to deal with this. But we are working with both of those communities to be able to make sure, and I'd be happy to meet with them after question period to be able to discuss the specifics. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, these doctors have been working with the SHA. They've pleaded with their MLA. And they have gotten nowhere to date.

Our doctors know that what we need to keep our health care system running is adequate access to primary care and other upstream services in our communities. SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] president Dr. Eben Strydom said it best: "The job of our system is to keep people out of hospital."

With 55 per cent of doctors planning to reduce clinical hours and 67 per cent in smaller centres set to do the same, many are shutting their doors altogether. Does this government recognize that expanding access to primary care and supporting those who provide it will alleviate pressures on our hospitals that are bursting at the seams?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just had the opportunity to talk to Dr. Strydom this morning. We just had a meeting this morning, upcoming to their meetings that Minister of Rural and Remote and I are having with the board tomorrow, supper with them tomorrow night. And we're also having the general conversation with all of the members of the SMA on

Friday.

So we are listening to the doctors, Mr. Speaker. They accuse us of not listening to the doctors. Just outlined talking to the doctors this morning, talked to the doctors on Friday, Mr. Speaker. We are listening to them. We're trying to address these concerns. We understand that there are pressures out there. We understand that the doctors are feeling pressures as well as all clinicians. That's why we want to be able to sit down and come up with a solution that will work for them in their specific communities.

There are fee-for-service doctors out there. There are salaried doctors, Mr. Speaker. There are nurse practitioners that this government brought in to be able to offset some of the pressures. We'll continue to do that not just by recruiting but also making sure that our universities . . . the ones that are coming out of our universities, the graduates have every opportunity to choose to practise in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, clearly that conversation is not going well if these folks have to come to their legislature. They have been sloughed off for months, nearly a year with form letters from these ministers, Mr. Speaker. It's time for real action.

These doctors are primary care physicians in two of Saskatchewan's fastest growing communities — Martensville and Warman. They have been pleading for the ministry's help as they continue to lose doctors in their communities. Losing doctors while struggling to recruit new ones has been an issue for years in the area. What is the plan to recruit doctors to Martensville and Warman and keep the ones we have?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I was remiss earlier. I want to thank the member from Martensville in this Assembly for the advocacy that he's done on behalf of both of his communities, Mr. Speaker. He has met multiple times with myself and the Minister of Rural and Remote Health to address these issues. So I want to thank him for that.

But the community members, Mr. Speaker, again I understand that they want to come down here. I'd be more than happy to chat with them about this. But these are challenges that we're experiencing all across Canada and around the world within our medical community, Mr. Speaker.

But as I've identified before, we have the dollars. We have the plan. We have the budget — they voted against, again — to be able to bring these individuals in, not just from around the world but from within Saskatchewan. Recruit, train them, incentivize them, Mr. Speaker, to be able to make sure that they have every opportunity to practise in our beautiful province. And maybe if the NDP didn't run down our province so much, Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't have all these people trying to head out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, we know what their plan is: downplay, deflect, disparage, and deny. The doctors that they do have, the ones who are here today are tired, overburdened, and feel that their pleas to this government are going unanswered.

With nearly 25,000 people living in these two cities and less than 10 family doctors, the doctor-to-patient ratio is unsustainable. Compared to other cities with similar populations, this area should have nearly double that number of primary care doctors. Again, what is the ministry doing to ensure that Warman and Martensville have enough doctors to provide care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very similar to my earlier answer, Mr. Speaker, we are working with the community. We've met with the doctors just as recently as Friday to be able to discuss this. It was prioritized on our briefing that happened earlier this week with the Minister of Rural and Remote and myself, with the SHA and the ministry, to be able to identify what are some of the things that we can do up there.

Mr. Speaker, we're looking at opportunities to bring Saskatoon physicians in temporarily to be able to backfill those. We're also looking at nurse practitioners. We understand that there's some challenges in Martensville and in Warman. But we're able to work with this because we have a very comprehensive plan. We have the dollars allocated by the Minister of Finance specifically for health, Mr. Speaker, and specifically in this. We are continuing to work with our doctors to make sure that they can provide the services that Saskatchewan people need, and especially in Martensville and in Warman. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the doctors here today are asking for the government to find unique ways to solve this problem. Dr. Adamus had this to say:

Our communities are unique in this province. They do not fit into a box like most other communities do. The solution has to be equally unique.

The two cities are classified as bedroom communities rather than rural or urban, making it near impossible for them to recruit doctors under the return-of-service agreement model.

Will the minister remove Martensville and Warman from the list of excluded communities for all return-of-service agreements?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the exact things that we were discussing with our officials. What are the options out there? What is it that we can put on the table to be able to say that we can help out Martensville and Warman? Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to make sure that we're providing the services.

And absolutely, if there are issues with physician services in Martensville and Warman, we do have Saskatoon. That's not

ideal, Mr. Speaker, but we do. This is why we're building our urgent care centre up in Saskatoon. We're working on our urgent care centre here in Regina . . . is to take these pressures off. But we understand the importance of family physicians, and we want to be able to provide them with as much support as we possibly can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the status quo is not working. With not enough doctors and no publicly funded health centre, community members are forced to go without a family doctor or travel to Saskatoon for care. And as of April, Martensville Collective Health & Wellness has had to suspend its walk-in clinic due to doctor shortages. The situation is dire, it's unacceptable, and it needs immediate attention. Will the minister remove Martensville and Warman from the list of excluded communities for all return-of-service agreements? Yes or no.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, let me just first say that, as I said in my previous answers, that we do have a record when it comes to recruitment and retention of health care professionals in this province. Mr. Speaker, we are looking at ways — and they're funded in this most recent budget — on how we can be innovative in continuing to recruit our health care professionals in the communities. And I do understand . . . Mr. Speaker, I do . . . Mr. Speaker, I do understand that in the case of Martensville and Warman with the growth rate that they have in those communities and in the surrounding area that there is some uniqueness to what we are working through in that particular area.

I would like to say thank you to the MLA who has raised this with both of the Health ministers, raised it with myself, Mr. Speaker. We've had a discussion with respect to Warman and Martensville. And I would offer — and this should speak to the seriousness of this government in addressing all health care challenges we have across this province — I would offer to the community members and to the physicians that are here today that myself, the two Health ministers, and the member from Martensville-Warman will sit down with you after question period and we'll look at what options we might have as we look forward, as we look ahead.

[14:15]

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

Access to Reproductive Health Services

Ms. Sarauer: — I'm glad to see the Premier find his feet. I hope he finds his feet for this next question.

Yesterday our caucus reaffirmed our commitment to reproductive rights and access to abortion services. In light of news coming out of the US [United States], many elected leaders across Canada and the world have taken the time to do the same. We asked for the Premier to set the record straight on his and his government's commitment yesterday. He didn't. The press

gallery asked him to respond. He didn't. The Premier's office promised to provide a written statement. They didn't.

So again, Mr. Speaker, will the Premier get on his feet today? Will he rise to affirm his government's commitment to reproductive rights, or will he not again?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As we're all aware of the leaked documents with respect to the United States Supreme Court judgment that may be coming in a month or two, I again would say that in this case a decision that has not even been rendered yet most certainly has no impact on Canadian law. And it certainly has no impact on, Mr. Speaker, it certainly has no impact on women's reproductive rights, in particular in the nation of Canada, which includes Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to abortion more specifically in this nation, it continues to be a covered practice protected under the *Canada Health Act*, that's been tested in court, was upheld under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Mr. Speaker. And most certainly the province of Saskatchewan is going to continue to follow the letter of the law in Canada under the *Canada Health Act*.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, of course we know that an American decision doesn't affect Canadian law. But this government controls the purse strings that affect access to abortion services, and what we didn't hear is a commitment to ensuring that that is enhanced and affirmed.

So will this Premier again stand up, affirm his government's commitment to a woman's right to choose?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — I thought that's what I just did in the previous answer, Mr. Speaker. What I said is abortion is covered under, is a service that is offered and covered under the *Canada Health Act*. That's been reaffirmed by the courts, Mr. Speaker, and in the province of Saskatchewan, we most certainly will be following the law.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Well that answer was all we needed to hear, Mr. Speaker. Access to abortion is not equitable to all people, despite what the Minister for the Status of Women may claim. In Regina, abortions are available up to 18 weeks of pregnancy with no referral necessary, yet in my home town of Saskatoon, abortions are available only up to 12 weeks and only by referral. That means that those living in the northern three-quarters of Saskatchewan will have to talk to their family doctor first in order to get referred for abortion, only if they can get an appointment with their family doctor, and that's if they even have one.

Sask Party failures have for years harmed those seeking reproductive health care in our province. Do they simply not care,

or are they actively working to prevent access?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Status of Women.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm going to reject the premise of that question and that access because our government will not and will not ever impede access to reproductive rights.

Now I hope that the opposition will stop trying to score cheap political points off the backs of the women in this province. The US Supreme Court ruling has no impact on reproductive rights in Canada and in Saskatchewan. Abortion continues to be covered under the Canadian health Act and Saskatchewan will continue to follow the health Act. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, the minister can reject the premise if she wants, but she can't reject the reality. Last year, Mr. Speaker, I introduced a bill for buffer zones around facilities that provide abortion services and reproductive care. Twice I have introduced that bill. The government's response has been hand-wringing and stalling and exploring legal options.

But then they introduced a temporary buffer zone for all health facilities to prevent COVID protests, so the hand-wringing and stalling clearly wasn't about buffer zones or legal concerns at all, Mr. Speaker. It was because it had to do with safe access to abortion.

Do they not care? Or is this cowardly sidestep all to keep their anti-choice base happy?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Status of Women.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, the opposition needs to stop scaring women into thinking they won't be able to access service. Enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, women have the right to obtain services here in our province. Mifegymiso has also been added to the Saskatchewan formulary on September the 5th, 2017. Now that's effective . . . In June 2019, it became covered at no cost, so it's eligible for women across this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm so disappointed in the opposition that would use such an important issue as abortion and ability for women to obtain health care as a wedge issue. They may be falling in the polls, but they should not be doing it off the back of the women in this province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Suicide Prevention Strategy

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, this is the 15th day this spring I rise on behalf of Saskatchewan families, today the Sanderson 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 offer my sincerest condolences to the Sanderson family. The Pillars for Life, the Saskatchewan suicide prevention plan will continue to build upon existing initiatives and look for new initiatives to help address this challenge in our province, Mr. Speaker.

And one of those was discussed a little bit earlier today, Mr. Speaker, when we provided some additional details around the expansion of the mental health capacity-building program in schools. There is an additional \$800,000 in this year's budget for that program, which started in 2019 in five pilot schools across the province, including one in Sandy Bay and one in North Battleford, Mr. Speaker.

As announced in a press release this morning, the province's 27 school divisions will have the opportunity to apply for funding for the 2022-23 school year. And select schools will be notified in May in terms of being able to participate in this very successful mental health capacity-building initiative in our province's schools across Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — Point of order.

The Speaker: — State your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. I have a point of order arising out of question period. In his last 10 days in this place, the Leader of the Opposition continues to demonstrate why he is leaving in 10 days from this place, Mr. Speaker.

He purported to quote the Minister of Health during question period and said, quote, StatsCan is wrong. The Minister of Health had actually said, so is StatsCan wrong?

It was a question, Mr. Speaker. He completely changed the meaning by torquing the quote, which he has a history of doing literally every day in this place, Mr. Speaker. He needs to stand in his place. He needs to withdraw and apologize on his way out the door.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister said exactly those words. I repeated them as I heard them. The minister knows that is the case, and it is unfortunate that he would try to tell a different story than what actually occurred. I urge the Speaker to listen to the Hansard and clarify that. But those are the words that the minister used, and I repeat them in good faith.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, order. I take the point of order under advisement and will check *Hansard* and see if the comments are recorded.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 70

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

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Normally I would say it's a pleasure to take my feet — it's always an honour to be in this Assembly speaking to bills — but on this one, Mr. Speaker, I find myself, you know, struggling a bit with what exactly to say to this, *The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act*.

I find it interesting right now that the minister, the member for Meadow Lake, was able to so vigorously find his feet most recently as it was his name that was on the bill, but when he had the opportunity to speak to this bill in a scrum, you know, found the nearest and quickest exit. And, Mr. Speaker, perhaps that's not surprising given the government's complete inability to describe even the basics about why this bill is in front of us right now.

You know, I was looking up, you know, what are the characteristics of good legislation. What are some of the pieces that . . . You know, what are the standards that should be met in order to qualify for good legislation? And one of the first things that comes up time and time again, whether it's lessons for law classes or articles, Mr. Speaker, is that the law must be in the interests of the people. So, Mr. Speaker, on that very basic measure, this legislation, this proposed bill really does not meet that mark.

In the first opportunity that the minister who did speak to this bill had to speak to it, she said:

The safety and security of the Legislative Building, the staff, and the visitors is of the utmost importance to our government and we take this responsibility very seriously. We want to ensure that we create the safest environment for our employees who work in this building and for the members of the public who come to visit the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, that sounds passingly plausible, but that really was a high watermark in terms of the description and the defence of this bill. Mr. Speaker, it didn't get better from there. The issue of process, why this bill did not go to the Board of Internal Economy, was never met, Mr. Speaker. The minister was never able to describe the threats that necessitated this bill, nor why those threats were never made known to the Sergeant-at-Arms' office, nor to the members of the official opposition, Mr.

Speaker.

Even looking at what else was going on in November, Mr. Speaker, one of the pieces that I always think about when we see legislation brought to this floor is, you know, why now? What are the issues that need to be taken care of in this province?

You know, in November of 2021 when we first saw this bill, you would think that the members opposite would have more on their plates, more on their minds than upending years of parliamentary tradition, ceasing power of the Sergeant-at-Arms, and the control of the legislative precinct. Mr. Speaker, just for a reminder, I know it wasn't that long ago, six months ago, but we've been debating this bill for six months without that minister being able to articulate in any way the reason that we see this legislation here.

They could have been dealing with the fifth wave at that point. We were on the cusp of the fifth wave, the Omicron wave, Mr. Speaker, that we know now turned out to be one of the deadliest waves that saw our hospitals overwhelmed, that saw us have the worst rates of hospitalization and death in the country, Mr. Speaker. They could have been dealing with the suicide crisis. They could have been dealing with the mental health crisis. They could have been dealing with the fact that we had three years of the worst GDP and population growth in the country, Mr. Speaker.

But instead you see that minister from Meadow Lake and the Minister for Corrections standing up and putting forth a bill, now defending it for six months . . . Well trying to defend it, I will say, Mr. Speaker. They have never been able to say what the threats were that precipitated this.

[14:30]

You know, I've watched my colleagues on this side — and I will wrap up my comments very soon here — I've watched my colleagues, especially the member from Douglas Park, absolutely eviscerate this bill, the need for it, Mr. Speaker; defend the Sergeant-at-Arms staff and how they've protected this building and this precinct; talk passionately about the need for this Sergeant-at-Arms, for the legislative security force to be independent, to report to the Speaker instead of to a minister of the Crown, Mr. Speaker. It appears to have fallen on deaf ears.

I've seen previous reiterations of this government, previous premiers who, when they knew that they were wrong, pull legislation. This should have happened months ago with this legislation, Mr. Speaker. It didn't.

So it is not for want of trying from members on this side. It is not for want of being right and having the better arguments, Mr. Speaker. But I am prepared to conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker. I do hope in the interim period after, you know, perhaps after we rise and the minister has a chance to have some sober second thought on this, that we will see this bill never proclaimed, Mr. Speaker, because it really should not be. It's not in the interests of the people of this province. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The motion before the Assembly is the amendment by the member for Regina Douglas Park to the second reading motion for Bill No. 70, *The Legislative Assembly*

Amendment Act, 2021. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Those in favour of the motion please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: — Yea.

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 14:31 until 14:39.]

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the amendment to the second reading motion for Bill No. 70, *The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 2021*. All those in favour of the amendment please stand.

[Yeas — 11]

Meili	Wotherspoon	Vermette
Sarauer	Ritchie	Beck
Mowat	Bowes	A. Young
Nippi-Albright	Wilson	

The Speaker: — All those opposed to the amendment please stand.

[Nays — 42]

Moe	Stewart	McMorris
Merriman	Harpauer	Morgan
Duncan	Tell	Wyant
Makowsky	Docherty	Cheveldayoff
Bradshaw	Kaeding	L. Ross
Carr	Eyre	J. Harrison
Hindley	Marit	Buckingham
Fiaz	Lambert	Bonk
Kirsch	Steele	Ottenbreit
Francis	A. Ross	Lawrence
Skoropad	Nerlien	Meyers
Friesen	Grewal	McLeod
Cockrill	Goudy	Keisig
Lemaigre	Jenson	D. Harrison

Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 11; those opposed, 42.

The Speaker: — I declare the amendment lost.

The question before the Assembly is the motion by the minister that Bill No. 70, *The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 2021* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to

adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Those in favour of the motion please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: — Yea.

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — On division.

I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be on my feet to give my remarks on Bill No. 81, the labour . . .

The Speaker: — Member, I need to interrupt, please. We need to send Bill 70 to committee. To which committee shall this bill . . .

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — I would designate that Bill 81 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh sorry, Mr. Speaker. There was a little . . . Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would designate that Bill No. 70, *The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 2021* be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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 Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's quite interesting when you have a mix-up by members opposite that have been here longer than the newly elected MLAs.

[14:45]

But anyway, I am pleased to speak to Bill No. 81, *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act*. This is a new bill and it's speaking to . . . it's outlining the expectations for regulatory bodies and registration practices, giving the minister power to advise any and all regulatory bodies on issues of labour

mobility and professional registration. So also I understand that the minister can order compliance on recommendations made by the ministry to a regulatory body and that these regulatory bodies can appeal decisions and can also apply for exemption from ministerial oversight/interference. So this is very interesting. I thought this was a very interesting bill, new bill that's being introduced.

I used to work in the health sector for well over 20 years and have become very familiar with the shortage of health care staff where I worked in the health sector. And found that many, many, many folks that worked within the health sector came from different countries and were doctors and nurses and had different professions, but found quite disappointing to know that they were working within our health authority in entry-level positions. And I thought that was quite alarming. As a community developer working within the community and witnessing, working within the urban, rural communities, there was and still is shortages of family physicians.

And back when I was working, a sexy thing that came out was primary health. And nurse practitioners was pretty sexy at that time. And I thought, well this is good, very good. And I had an opportunity to work with one of the communities that had a shortage and a high turnover of family physicians. And one of the things . . . I've talked about this in the House in the past where the doctors that I was working with as a primary health facilitator and community developer, they came from another country. And I understood they had extensive experience and their education from another country, and as I built a relationship with those physicians, learned that they had to go through the SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment] program and apply to be in the SIPPA program and then commit three up to, I think, three to five years to the health authority and work in designated communities.

But what often happened is after their contracts were up, they left. And part of the reason is that we weren't very responsive in terms of ensuring that they were welcomed and their families were able to live in the community and be happy in the community. And many of these doctors, although the doctors themselves were happy working because they were busy all the time, their partners weren't able to find work. And I thought, why is that? And upon learning and hearing from the physicians, I found that their credentials weren't . . . They didn't meet the credentials in Canada.

So when I left my job, when I left that work in the health care field and I went and continued to do my master's degree in political studies, I was very interested in physician retention in Saskatchewan, so I did a lot of research in that. I looked at how are we retaining internationally trained medical people. And in my research I found that, you know, the financial incentives we have just don't cut it sometimes.

But I think what was most . . . And this speaks directly to this bill, I guess, is what I found was that . . . And it's an intergovernmental issue around immigration, around attracting folks to this country, that our application process isn't very transparent. Many folks that come to Canada think that, hope . . . Actually it lays it out in the application process that yes, come to Canada; we have all these great opportunities. But then when they get here, they find out their education doesn't match our

requirements here in Canada.

And it led me to ask, as a master's student in my master's degree program, why are we not . . . Where's the discrepancy? So I thought, why are we not being more transparent and also making it easier for those that come to Canada with their training, coming out here to be able to do the work and practise?

So this bill, you know, it seeks to address these challenges, people that are wanting to come to Saskatchewan to live and work, so that's good. And it does have these overlapping implications with immigration, justice, labour that will necessitate consultation. And I just want to look and I want to speak to that immigration piece again, where at the intergovernmental tables at the federal and provincial bodies, governments need to look at our immigration processes and also criteria that we have in place.

We do have a shortage of doctors, nurses, teachers, educators, etc. We do have that. We've seen that over and over again. And we also have to, I find, we have to be more . . . And this is what I found was interesting when I was doing my master's program and doing my research, how we have a very diverse group of health professionals here, yet we're not very responsive in ensuring that people stay here.

You know, I found one of the physicians that I was working with several years ago, in order for him to connect to his community, he had to drive two and a half hours to go and socialize with people from his community. And if he wanted to celebrate their cultural practices, he had to travel to Calgary. And I thought that was quite interesting.

And I think for us, we developed that relationship there because at that time, when I was working where I was working, in order for me to connect to the people that look like me, that practise their traditional cultures and practices, I would go to that community, that First Nation just because I could relate to them and they spoke a language I could understand. They understood the culture. So that brought that physician and I, it helped run our relationship together. And he understood why I came out to that community, and he wanted that.

You know, I think about those that we're asking them to come, leave their communities, leave their culture, leave their world view behind and come and practise here in Saskatchewan. We're not being very receptive, you know. So I think, although like I think this is good that this government is looking at removing some of those barriers, however I would take it a step further and say, how are we receptive? You know, how is the mainstream receptive to those that don't look like them, to those that are from a different culture or a different nationality?

And you know, we all know that, and this is sad to say, but the Sask Party choices have damaged Saskatchewan's reputable workforce in Canada and beyond. How are we treating people in this province, and in this House? And I'll go back to it, there's a few of us that are not Caucasian. And when some of us that are not Caucasian speak, the Caucasian representatives in this House are talking, are crosstalking, walking around, pointing fingers even at their own members, you know, when their own members . . . And don't get me wrong, member across the aisle there, I don't have no qualms in putting my own members, my

colleagues in their place. And I will continue to speak up for that.

So the training, the challenges. There's challenges around training for those that are not of mainstream culture. We have issues around language, language barriers. And I certainly hope that that is something that is being thought of and considered.

The other thing is I hope that this government will also consult those that are going to be impacted by this. You know, we had a delegation here yesterday from the Filipino community, the entrepreneurs. It would be good to chat with them.

And speaking about bills, you know, about introducing bills and regulatory bodies, one thing I want to say, that within the Indigenous community . . . And I think about Onion Lake First Nation who has oil wells and who has those in the energy sector in that area. And one of the concerns that they had is the regulations. There's no regulations there that are not . . . They're not being adhered to. And those First Nation communities that have energy sectors out there, they're not being consulted.

So I would certainly hope, rather than battling with one another, that you all would think about the people that you represent, the people that elected us in these positions, and really consult. And as a community developer for many years, we don't do a top-down approach. We actually talk to the communities, the people out at the grassroots level.

[15:00]

So I certainly hope that this government, the MLAs that have been elected, will consult and talk and meet and have dialogue, a two-way dialogue, with the people that elected them, so that they can bring bills together that would best serve them, not just a select few people.

So I'm sure my other colleagues will have more to say on this particular bill. So, Mr. Speaker, with that I move to adjourn debate on Bill 81, *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices 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. 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 Regina University.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to be on my feet today to talk about Bill No. 82, *The Income Tax Amendment Act*. You know the bill itself, Mr. Speaker, of course talks about some of the tax initiatives introduced in this budget from a tax credit for value-added agriculture and the increase to the cap for the technology start-up

incentive program, both of which have been canvassed in estimates thoroughly. And in addition to this, I believe updates provincial income tax as requested by the CRA [Canada Revenue Agency].

So a bill, Mr. Speaker, real focused on taxes and incentives. But this budget it seems like we've spent a lot of time talking about tax. Too much time, Mr. Speaker. Certainly too much time for my liking and too much time for the liking of small-business owners in this province, taxpayers, citizens, people who are now, more than ever, paying more and getting less.

This is a government, Mr. Speaker, that has doubled the size of its budget, doubled its spending, and continues to have worse outcomes year over year. And what's the solution, Mr. Speaker? Well they've turned around in this budget and slapped 32 taxes and fees onto industries struggling to get back onto their feet, and onto consumers, onto their neighbours, onto folks in this province who are looking to support local, looking to get back out there and are now going to be paying 6 per cent more because this government needs to keep building that stable revenue base. It's what we've heard time and time again in this House, Mr. Speaker, is the need for that stable revenue base, which I've noted before and I'll note again for the record is a passing strange way to refer to the people of this province — a stable revenue base.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, we know that the \$20 million this government is going to shake the people of Saskatchewan down for, \$20 million in a provincial budget of \$17 billion is, you know, it's almost a rounding error. Twenty million dollars would sure be nice at an individual level, but this is what we've seen: a pattern of behaviour from this government who can't manage the economy and can't get their spending under control. So what do they do? They turn around and nickel and dime — 20 million here, 100 million there, 500 million there — slowly adding to that budget because they can't control their spending. People are getting less and paying more, and this government continues to spend more while getting worse and worse outcomes for the province and for the people of Saskatchewan.

By far too many measures, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are a poor province in Canada, and that's a real shame when you look at how far we've fallen. 2021, Mr. Deputy Speaker, negative economic growth in this province for the fifth time in seven years. Five times in seven years. That's a pretty poor record, Mr. Speaker. Currently the economy is in worse shape — it's smaller; we are poorer as a province — than we were in 2013. That's remarkable, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and not in a good way. Not in a good way, Mr. Speaker.

We all want this province to grow. We want people to prosper. We want people to know that this is the best place in Canada to raise your family, start a business, to invest your money, and to have a good quality of life. We want people involved in their communities, spending time with their neighbours, having hobbies, creating art, pursuing their passions, volunteering, playing sports — all those things that we love that give life colour and that bring us together.

And yet in this budget, this government has seen fit to add more tax: 32 tax and fee increases to things that people love to do. And you know, for some government members maybe 6 per cent

doesn't really matter, but for many people this is a disadvantage and a disincentive.

You know, we had folks in from the fitness industry here — God, what day is it? — I believe last week, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The legislature is a strange place and sometimes it's hard to keep track of time and space. I believe last week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had folks in from the fitness industry. And the Finance minister wouldn't meet with them, wouldn't address their concerns. Many of these people had driven hours.

And you know, these people weren't my constituents. These people weren't New Democrats, in fact they were very much not New Democrats. These are folks who'd written to their MLAs, who'd reached out to their MLAs, you know, the Minister for Environment, member from Yorkton. And they'd said, why are we getting more communication from the opposition, from the NDP? We're organizers with the Conservative EDAs [electoral district association] out here, and yet the Sask Party members won't return our emails. They won't hear our concerns.

Or even stranger, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they've shared stories about Sask Party members saying, well yeah, I'm actually against all these tax and fee increases in the budget, but shucks, what can I do? Gee whiz, I'm only the government. We've only got our super majority that makes us feel so proud and so big and strong every day. But you know, shucks, I'm only an MLA and I guess I really don't have a voice with my cabinet colleagues or with the Finance minister, whoever it is running the show over there. Strange, Mr. Speaker.

And I think what unsettles people the most is the hypocrisy in that, Mr. Speaker. We see a government that's, you know, standing up, championing future economic growth with no ability to run on their own record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because that record is one of negative economic growth, which we know is shrinkage. Past five out of the last seven years, five of the last seven years, we have seen the economy contract. We've seen negative economic growth here in Saskatchewan.

And that's not good for the people. That's certainly not good for the government. It's not good for the province and it's not good for the future. And so when those members, you know, stand up and backslap and feel really good and yell, they're taking credit for other people's risk, other people's work, other people's investment.

And private industry hates that type of stuff. There's not a big business out there that really wants, you know, to have their business be thoroughly partisan, because those businesses aren't doing business with any particular political party, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They're doing business with the province of Saskatchewan and they're doing business with the people of Saskatchewan. They're investing in the province of Saskatchewan with the people of Saskatchewan.

And so the hypocrisy of this government to, you know, talk about future economic hopes and dreams that they have, that they're only able to talk about thanks to the risk and ingenuity of others. They talk about, you know, creating a good climate for business when they're chasing doctors out of the province, when we can't keep teachers in schools, when kids in schools have worse outcomes. Children we send to school in this province are going

to achieve less than kids in other provinces, which is a real shame regardless of which side of the aisle that you sit on, Mr. Speaker.

And we have this government champion, you know, this province that they've built, one with five of the last seven years with negative economic growth. We've canvassed some of the terrible, terrible measures that exist in this province that despite record spending, despite their willingness to stand up and champion record investment, still sees us the lowest literacy rates, highest infant mortality, highest maternal mortality, lowest access to health care in many places, highest child poverty.

And you know, I can see eye rolls, and I know this isn't something that's, you know, in the words of my colleague from Saskatoon Centre, sexy to talk about, but this matters. Nutrition, investing in early childhood is important. It sets people up for success. It sets this province up for success. It gives people a better chance at life, at productivity, at prosperity, at bringing all the value that they have to this province to grow it.

And we should be ashamed of that waste, and we should be working to address it because not only is it the right thing to do morally, not only is it an imperative for all of us elected members in this House . . . boy, it builds a stronger province. So the hypocrisy in this budget, Mr. Speaker, you know, imposing 32 taxes and fees after years — years and years and years of shrieking and refusing to address their lowest-in-Canada minimum wage because, you know, things have to be stable and predictable — they turn around, they don't consult with businesses. They don't consult with chambers. They don't consult with the CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business]. And they do this to solve a political problem, not because it's the right thing.

And they're burning those bridges with those stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, whether they want to admit it or not. Because people outside of this Chamber, they can look at StatsCan, they can look at records, and they can look at their own books. They can look at consumer confidence. They can read those things that show that the economy is not growing, no matter how much the members opposite want to insist.

So the hypocrisy shown by this government standing up talking about being back on track, talking about, you know, stable, predictable revenue, needing a stable, predictable tax base — which again is a really offensive way to talk about people in this province — only to turn around and slap those 32 taxes and fees on people just trying to get back out there, just trying to come together, and just trying to enjoy life.

It really shows how far this government has fallen, how vigorously and enthusiastically they're drinking their own bathwater, and how out of touch they are with the reality and with real folks in the province outside of their echo chamber. This is not a good news budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a bad news budget for business. It's a bad news budget for people.

And, Mr. Speaker, I guess I'd just like to say that, you know, for this government and for the government members over there who are saying, you know, I don't agree with the 32 taxes and fees in this budget, have those conversations with your front bench. Don't just say it to your constituents in text messages or DMs [direct message]. Have those conversations. You can still make

change.

To the new members: you can change the budget still. It's a budget. There's opportunities. You change it all the time. You've got OCs [order in council] flying left, right, and centre already changing spending in the budget. Do the right thing. Scrap the tax.

With that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 82, *The Income Tax Amendment Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

Bill No. 83

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

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, mister deputy deputy speaker. It's always interesting to do the deputy deputy twice.

[15:15]

Anyway I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill No. 83, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2022*. So this is an amendment to this tobacco tax. My understanding of this is that the budget announcement of a tobacco tax rate increase of 2 per cent per cigarette from 27 to 29 cents, and it's also an 8 per cent increase for smokeless tobacco, and an increase of 1.3 for heated tobacco, and an 8 per cent per gram increase for roll-your-own tobacco.

So these increases are expected to generate some incremental tax revenue, about 12.1 million annually. You know, I'm . . . The sin taxes make sense. However what doesn't make sense to me and many, many, many people that are struggling to make ends meet is the taxes-on-fun tax. You know, I agree that we want our rate of smokers to go down. And this is one way to deter people from smoking, and it also provides some revenue for our health care system. But you know, to just have a broad tax, broad-stroke tax on all goods that are good for our health, like sports, fitness, and arts, just doesn't make any sense.

You know, before I was elected as an MLA, or actually before I became a candidate, I remember the 6 per cent tax on construction, you know. And my husband is in construction. And one of my first conversations with my husband about that was how is this going to impact his work as a journeyman carpenter. And he had a lot to say on it. It was going to cost and it does cost those . . . It costs us more at the end of the day for that.

But these, you know, these tax and fee increases that have been introduced here, as MLAs here, as elected MLAs, these won't affect us much, these taxes. Who it will affect is those that are in

a much, much lower income tax bracket. They won't be able to afford to take their little ones to the zoo or to a movie theatre or to fairs.

Many people that I know . . . and they're not affluent people like some of the people here in this room. They're not affluent. They don't have much. They enjoy taking their families to places like the exhibition. And we know that many of these families save to get super passes, to get three-day passes to go to these fairs so that their babies, their children can enjoy themselves. So to add PST on those is going to cost them more. Many won't be able to afford to go.

And I also know there's many in my First Nation communities that I work with and have friends that enjoy golf. They love golf. They're big golfers. And many of them go outside their First Nation communities to golf, many small towns. How many of those folks are going to be impacted by the now PST on their golf memberships?

I also know a lot of people that love curling. Again, PST. Another one is the fishing licence fees. You know, summer's coming. Hopefully it will be a nice summer and not a lot of rain and a lot of cold. Hopefully it'll be nice. And I know many people, including myself, my family would go fishing. And we go camping. So for me as a First Nation treaty status person, I'm fortunate that I get to hunt and fish in our traditional territory. But who I think about is those that, my Caucasian friends that have to buy a fishing licence. So there is an increase in that.

One thing that stood out about the increases was in First Nation communities. Many of those First Nation communities and many that live on those First Nation communities either have low-paying jobs or are on social assistance. And one of the things I've noticed, and this is something that's been ongoing for many, many years, and it's appalling to know that their power bills are through the roof. My niece, who was living probably about half an hour, 45 minutes on a First Nation from Regina, her power bill was well over \$1,000 for one month. And this has been consistent across the province in First Nation communities where their power bills are through the roof.

And if members here do not know, I will educate you on the quality of the homes that are built or moved onto First Nation communities. The homes are not up to par, if I may. We have homes that are just not built with quality. And some of those homes, those older homes don't have insulation that is up to par. And some of those homes have electrical heating. So when we're going to start increasing power rates, and as this government is going to be doing, have they ever actually thought about those in those First Nation communities that rely on electrical heat? What incentives are there for them? Because they have no choice but to have those.

So I ask that the government do consultation. You know, consultation . . . We all know that duty-to-consult on anything for this government, they don't do it. You don't do it. And who's suffering is those that don't have the means we have in this House. Those are the ones that are suffering. Power rate: are they going to choose between having their lights on, their electrical heat in the house, or food? They won't be able to go out anywhere.

So I ask this government to think about that. I ask MLAs that are already elected, go and talk to your members, to those that are in your constituency. Not your affluent friends, but talk to those grassroots people that are struggling to make ends meet. And there is many, many in our constituencies that live day to day, not knowing if they could eat and feed their families, not knowing if they could afford the roof over their head.

This government does not care about the people of this province, even though you keep touting yourselves and patting yourselves on the back. Because if you did, we wouldn't have people dying out there of mental health and addictions. We wouldn't have young people, kids, without a home.

Miskasowin in Saskatoon in my constituency — and I brought it up here in the House where they were doing excellent work — Miskasowin is at White Buffalo Youth Lodge that was helping those under 30 years old have a safe place to sleep. Because they have no funding, they are closing their doors. How many of those young people are going to die? How many of those young people, that cannot afford to have a roof over their head, are going to suffer?

So the fee and tax increases, what is it doing to our people, the ones that have been intentionally ignored for so long by this government? The message you've sent over and over and over again to these people is, you do not care. And rightly so — you don't. Because for me, you know, at 5 o'clock, with the exception of the member from Athabasca and Cumberland, you guys can close your door at 5 o'clock. We can't close the door at 5 o'clock and go home, because we have loved ones that are suffering. We are dealing with suicide, drug overdoses, poverty. We can't close our door at 5 o'clock. You know, I'm honoured to have colleagues on our side here who care, who have gone out of their way.

But what has this government done to those that are suffering, to those that cannot make ends meet? You've increased taxes and fees to the most simple things that people enjoy. While the rest of us in here may take for granted, those folks enjoy going to take their children out. They can't afford to do that.

And the numbers you guys keep talking about. A family of four making . . . What is it? A lot of money here. You know what? I invite you. Come and walk with me. Come to the communities I go to, and you ask them, how much is their paycheque? And I bet you your shoes, your suits are worth more than their little, measly paycheque they bring home. And yet you have no qualms in increasing taxes and fees because it doesn't affect you guys.

[15:30]

Who it affects is those . . . the ones that you ignored, the ones you do not care about. And this government does not care. If you cared, Prairie Harm Reduction would get dollars, Miskasowin would not be closing its doors, the shelter in Saskatoon would have ongoing funding, and we would actually have services.

I'm going to share something with you. I know there has been many on the other side wondering where the heck I was last week. I'll tell you where I was. I was with my family because my niece, who was playing Russian roulette with her life, died from a drug overdose. So when I say that I cannot close my doors at 5

o'clock, and then to have people wondering where the heck is the member of Saskatoon Centre . . . My niece, had she had the support to deal with her mental health issues, her depression, her fear of having her foot amputated, had she had those resources, would she be here today?

Suicide. I've had members of my family die from suicide. And I'll tell you, when my brother, when my nephews died from suicide, I couldn't access any services to support me, a survivor, somebody who survived a loved one's death. I couldn't access services because there was nothing available there. And I can deal with mental health. I suffer from depression, but I have many of my loved ones who do not have the skill set and the resources that I have. So for them, they did not have the resources I was able to have to deal with the losses in my life.

So when you guys are talking about the Pillars for Life, that any grassroots person knows nothing about and doesn't understand, that's so vague, give yourselves . . . Shake your heads. You've lost the pulse of the community, the people that we serve.

You know, when my brother took his life to suicide, I prayed and I was so pissed off with my brother because I was left dealing, mourning this loss. And I had searched everywhere to find support, and there was none. And you can go and say, oh my God, all you want, Minister Tell . . . Oops. I withdraw that.

But this is serious, you guys. Mental health affects us all, and when we don't have resources available . . . I was fortunate enough to find a 12-week support service to deal with those left behind by suicide, and there was only 12 of us that were able to participate in that 12-week program. And when I asked them, what dollars do you get from the province? They said none. None. People were driving three, four hours to come to that support group.

So when you guys are touting yourselves about the Pillars for Life, think about that. Where is the supports for people that are left behind by suicide? The ones that took their lives, their pain ended; it stopped. But the rest of us that are left behind have to deal with that. I have attended many, many funerals of young people that have played Russian roulette on their life and died of a drug overdose, and my heart breaks for those that are left behind.

And this government keeps saying, oh, we have the Pillars for Life, this vague Pillars for Life, and we introduced it whenever we introduced it and it's working. Or it . . . [inaudible] . . . two years old. But here's the thing. We need help now. Our young people are dying. Unless this government is okay with young people dying from drug overdose. Unless this government is okay with young people taking their lives. Unless this government doesn't care about people's mental health.

My colleague that introduced this bill that you all sat here and patted yourselves on the back and took nice pictures and shook hands and hugged and shed a tear here and there, you've walked back on it. You've walked back on it. The message not only . . .

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Order. Can I ask the member to stick with the Bill No. 83, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act*?

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — I'm bringing it back. I'm bringing this back to the tax. Many people, now that marijuana is legalized, what I heard was very alarming was that marijuana is laced with fentanyl. Very alarming. How do we help those that are suffering?

What this government has been doing is creating hardships. These taxes that you've introduced, these 32 fee and tax increases, who you're hurting is those that are already hurting, the ones that are dealing with mental health and addictions, the ones that are dealing with poverty, the ones that are dealing with domestic violence, the ones that are trying to make ends meet, the ones that are working three jobs just to put food on the table and a roof over their head. You're increasing the fee and taxes, and it's hurting them.

So when you're looking at your Bill No. 83, yes, it's going to generate 12.1 million annually. But what you're doing at the same time with this bill is you're making it harder for those that are less fortunate than us to enjoy life, to have fun. That's what this is about here.

And I'm also about deterring smoking . . .

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Can I get the member to stick with the Bill 83, which is *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act*?

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Yes. This tobacco tax is hopefully a deterrent, a deterrent from those that smoke. And certainly this tobacco tax will help with those in health care because there's many that are affected by tobacco use.

So with that, I know you guys don't like hearing any more, but I've said what I needed to say. And I'm sure my other colleagues will have more to say on this. And it's just sometimes, I have to say, I get . . . and like, as all of you, we get fired up. We get passionate about things, especially when members opposite are going on about things and not really thinking about the people that are going to be impacted most by the decisions that this government makes.

So with that I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 83, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2022*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — 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 Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise this

afternoon to enter into second reading debates on this Bill No. 84, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, this is of course . . . The previous speakers, members on this side, have had opportunity to speak to other bills arising or coming out of the budget that, you know, raise taxes and fees on a whole host of things in this province — 32 fee and tax hikes in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I think it was a puzzling budget in a lot of ways, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But you know, if the members opposite, if the government did canvass the people of Saskatchewan and looked to, you know, what people in this province were looking for in this budget, the first budget after some semblance of normalcy, the first budget after two years of being through a global pandemic, the first budget that we've seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where people were really, really looking to this government to provide some relief on a number of issues.

I've had opportunity, as many members on this side have, working with stakeholders, visiting to various areas in the province to meet with people, everyday folks, as my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Centre just noted. These aren't the folks who are hanging out at Memories, Mr. Deputy Speaker. These aren't the folks who are, you know, taking vacations south. These are folks who work hard in this province, who spend their paycheques here in the province, and they're really struggling.

I think we all know folks who've really struggled over the last two years. Some consistent . . . You know, despite a very large land mass in this province, there's some striking similarities, whether we're talking to folks at SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] or at SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], we're talking to folks in the North, in the South, urban and rural areas, some very consistent messages in terms of some of the struggles that people have been having over the last two years.

Mental health and addictions really is one of those things. Of course, you know, there are impacts greater in some communities than others. And I know that's been canvassed here recently by my colleague from Saskatoon Centre, but also canvassed by my colleague from Cumberland, Mr. Speaker, and you know, a disproportionate impact.

But I think what we've seen over the last two years has been, you know, that sense of that being other — that sense of mental health and addictions being something that impacts other families, other postal codes, other demographics — has really broken down. I live in, represent, you know, a central constituency in Regina, a lot of affluence in the constituency, Mr. Speaker. Those ambulances come to my neighbourhood too. Those mental health concerns, they impact folks right across this province.

And you know, I think things were difficult before the pandemic, before COVID-19, but they've only been made worse. And that's something you hear consistently. I think it's something we'll continue to struggle with for years and years to come, and it's something that people really were looking to this government to provide some relief there.

We know that caring and personal acts are important for all of us, but how government creates public policy, how they invest in that public policy is very, very important. I used an example

recently about Quebec. In a 10-year period they were able to reduce youth suicides by 10 . . . or by 50 per cent rather, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's a lot of lives saved. What we do matters.

[15:45]

And budgets, where we choose to invest or not invest, that matters. Who bears the brunt of decisions made by a government? In this case, 32 fee and tax hikes. Mr. Speaker, that matters.

We've talked a lot about caring in this Assembly recently. I guess every one of us will have to decide, you know, look into ourselves and think about what we care about, who we care about. But what we value, who we listen to, it gets reflected in documents like these, in budgets. And I can't help looking at this budget and wondering who the members opposite, who the government, who the people making the decisions about this budget have been talking to. Because in addition to mental health and addictions, the other thing that I hear a lot in every community is about affordability.

We've had, have right now, second-lowest minimum wage in the country at a time when we've got record 30-year, 31-year record inflation. People who've lost their jobs over the last little bit, people who've worried about their jobs, people who've had to take on increased cost over the course of the pandemic — affordability is something in every community, and it is something that is not made better, that is for sure, by 32 fee and tax hikes in this budget.

I said I'd say three. The other thing that I consistently hear is people's desire to go back to some type of normalcy. People are tired of division. People are tired of feeling isolated. Seniors high on that list, Mr. Deputy Speaker, seniors who have a fixed income and are looking forward to going to the art sale, the craft sale.

Mr. Speaker, so when you see a bill like this or a series of bills that puts 32 fee and tax hikes on things like . . . I'm going to read from the bill itself here:

film, slide show, sound and light or similar presentation;

artistic, literary, theatrical, musical or other performance, entertainment or exhibition;

fair, circus, menagerie, rodeo or similar event; or

race, game of chance, athletic contest or other contest or game.

It goes on, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This includes museums, historical sites, zoo, wildlife or other parks, places where bets are placed, any place, structure, apparatus, machine or device which is meant to provide any sort of amusement or recreation, Mr. Speaker.

So this is literally a tax on fun in our province at a time when people really were looking forward to getting out. And I do wonder, you know, sometimes about an attitude. I'm going to . . . You know, I'll let the members correct me if I'm wrong on this, but there's a perception. At least I perceive, if it's not a problem

for me, it's not a problem, Mr. Speaker. But this is a problem for people in our province.

You know, some might say, what's the difference? Six per cent on a fee on some of these things. Well it's not just members on this side who are worried about that. We look at the arts community, one of the hardest hit groups — there've been a number — over the last two years. They were looking forward to this summer. They've come out and said, we've been through . . .

Going back here, this is an article from April the 7th, 2022, this year. Members of the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance talking about this bill, Bill 84: "Bringing in this PST cost creates barriers to that [recovery]. It creates barriers to artists sharing their work." "We've seen cancelled events, audiences not returning even when restrictions have . . . [been] lifted." Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that taxes those who can least afford it.

And again, Mr. Speaker, there are always difficult decisions to be made by any government. This is a government that is sitting on record revenue from potash, unexpectedly high oil and gas revenue. They had choices to make, Mr. Speaker, but this instead is the choice that we've seen by this government.

And it really is out of touch with the realities of so many in this province, so many communities — with the arts community, with those who are trying to host rodeos, those who are trying to host events, curling in curling rinks, and hockey rinks across this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, again this has been well canvassed, you know, and to what benefit? Well this is an interesting thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To what benefit do we see this hike that's put a damper on all of these areas of amusement, the tax on fun?

Well my colleague from Rosemont tried to ask in committee the other night how much this will net this government. You know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They couldn't answer the question. The arts community, those who are putting on these events, they know that this is going to impact their business, that this is just one more thing that might put it out of the reach of too many people. But in committee, the minister could not answer how much, how much this new tax was going to net the government, which is interesting, Mr. Speaker.

It will have an impact on people, their ability to attend these events, but it'll also have an impact on these organizations, organizations so impacted over the last two years.

I don't know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this is about caring or not. But it does appear to me to be about a government that is out of touch with the reality for most folks in this province, a government that is a little too inclined to listen to their own talking points, and a little too disinclined to get out there and get their hands dirty talking to folks who are really, you know, just scraping by at this point.

I think I've said what I needed to say here on this bill. I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 84.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The Government House Leader moved to adjourn this House. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — This House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:54.]

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