



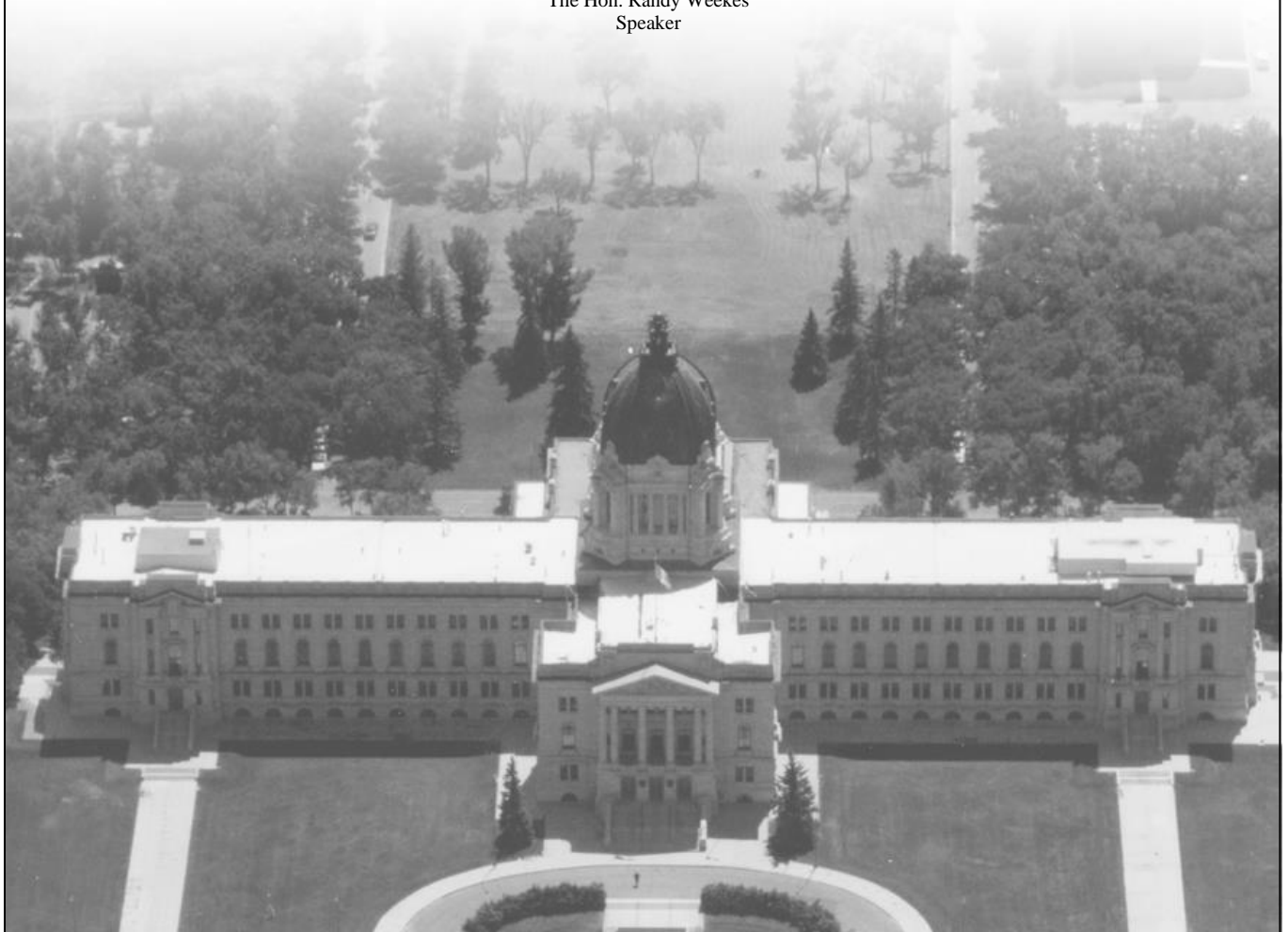
SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

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



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
2nd Session — 29th Legislature

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

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

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

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Gregory A. Putz

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

Deputy Clerk — Iris Lang

Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyak

Sergeant-at-Arms — Sean Darling

Hansard on the internet
Hansard and other documents of the
Legislative Assembly are available
within hours after each sitting.
<https://www.legassembly.sk.ca/Calendar>

CONTENTS

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker.....	2443
Sarauer	2443

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ross, A.	2443
Conway	2443
Eyre	2443
Ritchie.....	2444
Kaeding.....	2444

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Sarauer	2444
Conway	2444
Ritchie.....	2445
Beck.....	2445
Bowes	2445

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Remembering Harry Sotropa

Young, A.	2445
----------------	------

Prairie Sky Business Excellence Awards

Jenson	2446
--------------	------

Saskatoon's Sum Theatre

Ritchie.....	2446
--------------	------

Saskatoon Organizations Raise Money for Health Bus

Friesen	2446
---------------	------

Recognizing Retirement of Swift Current Ophthalmologist

Hindley.....	2446
--------------	------

Lloydminster to Host 2024 Saskatchewan Summer Games

Young, C.	2447
----------------	------

New Supportive Housing Units in Prince Albert

Ross, A.	2447
---------------	------

QUESTION PERIOD

Provision of Mental Health Care

Meili	2447
Hindley.....	2447

Saskatchewan Income Support Program

Conway	2448
Harpauer	2448

Paid Sick Leave and Supports for Employees

Bowes	2449
Morgan	2449

SaskPower Rates

Young, A.	2450
Morgan	2450

Informed Consent in Mental Health and Addictions Facilities

Wilson	2451
Hindley.....	2451

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Dennis	2452
--------------	------

THIRD READINGS

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

Harpauer	2452
----------------	------

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

Harpauer	2453
----------------	------

Bill No. 44 — *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2021*

Harpauer	2453
----------------	------

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

Harpauer	2453
----------------	------

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Small Modular Reactor Technology in Saskatchewan

Jenson	2454
Young, A.	2456, 2462
Grewal	2457, 2462
Ritchie	2458, 2462
Harrison, D.	2459, 2462
Love	2461, 2462
McLeod	2462
Meyers	2462
Skoropad	2463

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 606 — *The Saskatchewan Employment (Paid Sick Days) Amendment Act, 2021*

Bowes	2464
Recorded Division	2466

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker: — I'd like to welcome all the guests in the gallery. It's a pleasure to have you here. I'd just like to remind all of you that you're not to take part in the debate, and that means no clapping or cheering or booing or using your iPhones as far as texting and email as well. Thank you.

Yesterday, May 11th, 2022, the Government House Leader rose on a point of order. He stated that during question period the member from Regina Douglas Park made an unfounded personal attack on the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. I have reviewed *Hansard* and am now prepared to make my ruling.

The member from Regina Douglas Park's statement can be found on page 2438 of *Hansard*. In responding to an answer by the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, the member stated, "... a minister who has faced disciplinary measures in her previous career for the misuse of sensitive data."

Members should know by now, given the numerous rulings from the Chair during this session, that remarks which impugn a member's integrity, honesty, or character are out of order. The *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 3rd Edition, 2017, page 624 states that the Speaker takes into consideration the intention of the member speaking and the person to whom the words at issue were directed. I think the answer to that question is sufficiently clear. In her comment, the member attempts to call into question the character of the minister. I find the point of order well taken and ask the member for Regina Douglas Park to withdraw and apologize.

I recognize the member.

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I apologize and withdraw.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Ms. A. Ross: — Request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my distinct pleasure to introduce Elder Sydney McKay of Cumberland House Cree Nation and Annie Ewenin, director of education and child

care at Cumberland Crossing, who are both seated in your gallery today.

The Cumberland Crossing Inn, located in the downtown core of Prince Albert, offers student housing, affordable rooms, transportation for medical appointments, along with a daycare centre now.

To make this feasible, the partners operate it in a mixed-use facility with the focus on helping northerners who come to Prince Albert by offering an affordable place to stay. This hotel offers a safe environment and promotes the First Nations culture to their guests.

Two universities and three technical training centres in Prince Albert have created the need for housing and child care. Cumberland Crossing has helped to fill that need by offering affordable housing and — this most recently, Mr. Speaker — 50 child care spots for a 24-hour daycare with a First Nations approach, offering traditional meals, smudging, elders, storytime, a language class, culturally appropriate games, and hands-on learning.

They hope that this facility will be opening on August the 1st of this year. And this is a first-of-its-kind offering in Saskatchewan and will hopefully be a template for others to follow.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in welcoming Elder McKay and Annie Ewenin to their legislature and thanking them both for their tireless efforts to help establish the Cumberland Crossing Inn daycare in Prince Albert.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the member opposite in welcoming our friends from P.A. [Prince Albert], Elder McKay, Annie Ewenin from Cumberland Crossing.

On behalf of the official opposition, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the tremendous work you're doing under likely what are exceptionally challenging circumstances. So thank you so much for all you do for your community.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Introduction has been ... asked for extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery it's my real pleasure to welcome Dr. Gary Delaney, chief geologist at the Saskatchewan Geological Survey. He's joined today by his wife, Pat.

Mr. Speaker, Gary is a legend in Energy and Resources. He's worked on the Geological Survey team since 1986. He's held positions on a number of notable Canadian boards. And unfortunately for us, his last day was last week.

Gary started out doing geological mapping in northern Saskatchewan, walking the rocks, as they say, over hundreds of kilometres, and he developed a series of detailed geological maps which have played a key role in discovering gold in the area. And as members know, we've had something of a gold rush in the province the last few years.

But it's not just gold, Mr. Speaker. I always say the Saskatchewan Geological Survey and Gary's work is really where science meets our sectors in Energy and Resources. It's thorough; it's established; it's independent. And it's really an example of get 'er done, scientific, university-connected, a supply chain in the truest sense. And in this province it has led directly to literally groundbreaking work, most recently in the critical minerals space — in copper, in nickel, in helium — and has led directly to private investment and to mine projects, Mr. Speaker.

The SGS [Saskatchewan Geological Survey] has enough ground samples, as I understand it — and I hope I get this right — that if you line them up back to back from Regina they'd reach all the way to La Ronge, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to miss walking the convention floor with Gary at PDAC [Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada] this year, the mining exploration conference, although I understand he's going to make his way there in another guise because he really knows everybody. He really is the rock star — no pun intended — an energy resource unto himself.

So I'd like to thank Gary for his 36 years of service to the Government of Saskatchewan. He will be missed. Please join me in welcoming Pat and Gary to their Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and in wishing Gary all the best in retirement.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well this is truly a great pleasure to be able to congratulate a really good colleague and friend of mine, Gary Delaney, on his retirement after 36 incredible years as a geologist with Saskatchewan Geological Survey here in the province, truly a world-class organization that has been so fundamental and essential to resource growth here in our province and its development.

It has been truly an honour to have the pleasure of knowing Gary over the many years that he's been in the employ of the Government of Saskatchewan, doing crucial work that has been, as I said, world-class. He is truly a rock star in the profession. I wish him all the best in his retirement. I ask all members to join me in welcoming him to his legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of the Assembly, I would like to welcome, seated in the west gallery, 10 grade 8 students from the

Countryside School in Bredenbury. They're accompanied by their teacher today, Raelene Bieganek; and their support staff, Russ Janzen, Gordon Wohlgemuth, Narcenio Cano; and parent chaperones, Mark and Jana Wohlgemuth.

I am looking forward to, I believe, a very robust discussion after question period. I would like to ask all members to welcome the students and staff of Countryside School to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to scrap Bill 70. Those who have signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: the independence of security at the legislature is of great importance to Saskatchewan people; it is a long-standing parliamentary custom that security maintain independence by reporting to the Speaker; the Speaker has a constitutional duty to defend the privileges of the legislature and its members; the Sergeant-at-Arms has successfully maintained the security of the legislature and its grounds since the '80s.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 70 would turn the Sergeant-at-Arms into largely a ceremonial role. It breaches tradition in how issues of security at the legislature are handled, which have traditionally gone before the bipartisan Board of Internal Economy.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to stop the passage of Bill 70, *The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 2021*.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing this petition today come from Marquis and Moose Jaw. I do so present.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm on my feet to again present a petition calling on this government to scrap the failed SIS [Saskatchewan income support] program. Franklin Roosevelt famously said that "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

Mr. Speaker, this is a lesson that the sitting government couldn't be further from learning, Mr. Speaker. And as our economic numbers show a shrinking GDP [gross domestic product], rising unemployment, we do ourselves no favours by failing to support the most vulnerable among us.

It is time for this government to scrap SIS and return direct payment of utility and rent to landlords, Mr. Speaker, and provide sufficient rates for individuals to meet their basic needs.

With that I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to restore direct payment of rent and utilities for income support clients.

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

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm on my feet today to present a petition calling on the government to protect Saskatchewan's water supply and implement a credible wetland policy. The undersigned wish to bring to your attention that Saskatchewan's lack of a wetland policy is adversely affecting water quality, and that significant work remains to be done to better regulate drainage.

It has been estimated that inland fresh water wetlands have decreased globally by 70 per cent since the beginning of the 20th century. With climate change and tumultuous weather conditions affecting agricultural production, conserving wetlands is more important than ever.

Wetlands provide crucial ecosystem services, such as water and nutrient filtration, climate control, and flood control. They support plant pollination, provide food for wildlife, and supply building and crafting materials.

It's more clear than ever that wetlands play a crucial role in the overall health of our environment. It's been said that if nature hurts, we hurt as humans. And we need to build back resiliency in agricultural and other systems by restoring wetlands in nature.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan actively protect Saskatchewan's water from current and future threats to our valuable water supply.

This is signed by the residents of Balcarres and Melville.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the Sask Party government to finally, finally provide adequate and predictable funding to education and to stop the crisis in our classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition want to draw our attention — as many groups have sought to draw our attention — to the fact that our classrooms are chronically underfunded at the hands of this government. We've had boards sound the alarm. We've had students who have taken to the steps of this building. And most recently the CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] education workers, Mr. Speaker, talking about cuts to staff hours, cuts to supports, all which negatively impact our children and their learning, and that the Sask Party government's cuts leave educators and support staff without the resources that they need to properly support a pandemic recovery, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

Those who signed the petition were looking for some relief in this budget and found none, Mr. Speaker. Instead they found more underfunding.

I'll read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed the petition today reside in Regina. I do so present.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise, especially today, to call on the government to pass paid sick leave legislation. In this petition, Mr. Speaker, the residents of Saskatchewan want to bring to our attention the following: that a healthy workforce is good for the economy; that lives could be saved if workers could afford to stay home when they're sick — so many cannot afford to do so, Mr. Speaker; that no one should have to make the choice between going to work sick or risking the roof over their head by staying home; that workers, doctors, public health officials all have called for paid sick leave in Saskatchewan; and the official opposition has twice now introduced paid sick leave legislation since the onset of this 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 will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to introduce and pass paid sick leave legislation when it comes to a vote later today.

The petition today has been signed by folks from Wakaw and Prince Albert. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Remembering Harry Sotropa

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to mourn the passing of and celebrate the life of a local business leader, and more importantly, a local icon: Vern Sotropa. Better known as Harry, he was the co-owner and operator of an institution in the Warehouse District, Harry's Hi-Fi.

Harry and his soulmate, Pat, opened Harry's Hi-Fi in 1983, and anyone who ever darkened the door will know the generous and easy welcome that you'd receive upon a visit. You never felt pressured to buy anything, and more often than not, you'd just hang out and listen to music as Harry, full of eagerness and excitement like it was his first day, would play you Pink Floyd or Etta James on whatever new set of incredibly expensive

speakers or system had come in. He wouldn't let you buy anything he didn't think was exceptional, and his love for music ran through to his support for local shows and musicians. He'd swear a blue streak and was passionate about his beliefs, but he had — even for a local business owner — an uncanny warmth and ability to make anyone feel like a genuine friend, not a customer.

His loss is immense for his family and also keenly felt by the thousands of customers and innumerable people in Regina and across Canada who knew him. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in celebrating the late, great Harry and consider spinning some vinyl and supporting some local musicians. He would have liked that.

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

Prairie Sky Business Excellence Awards

Mr. Jensen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Saturday, May 7th, business owners and their staff along with sponsors all came together in person for the first time in two years to celebrate the best of the best. The seventh annual Prairie Sky Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards gala was a sold-out event that drew over 230 people to the North Ridge Centre in Martensville.

Mr. Speaker, Prairie Sky represents over 260 members in the business community, not only in Warman and Martensville, but in the region north and northwest of Saskatoon. I was proud to attend this year's gala and present the Community Service Award on behalf of SaskTel to Zak's Home Hardware based in Warman, Mr. Speaker.

Other winners included Warman Farmers Market, winning Non-profit of the Year; Laserology Skin Clinic, New Business of the Year; Dahlia Salon and Spa for Employer of the Year; Warman Home Centre for Customer Service Award. Business Marketing of the Year went to Pretty Little Pieces boutique. And finally, Mr. Speaker, the Business of the Year for 2022 is Lakeview Insurance.

Not to be forgotten, Mr. Speaker, were the finalists in all categories and they should also be proud of their accomplishments. Mr. Speaker, there were over 58 nominations received in the seven categories, and it's a true testament to their resiliency and strength of the business community in the Prairie Sky Chamber of Commerce region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatoon's Sum Theatre

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Joel Bernbaum, a constituent in my riding, is the co-founder of Sum Theatre as well as its artistic director. They created Theatre in the Park, Saskatchewan's first free professional live outdoor theatre. In neighbourhood public parks around the province each summer, Theatre in the Park offers an original, family-friendly show free of charge.

Due to extreme heat the last few summers, the production has been moved to May and June from July. This year's production is *wâhkôhtowin*, a show about the kinship between all things. The production is thought-provoking as well as fun with catchy, original music and colourful sets, props, and costumes that bring the story to life. Sum Theatre also produces *The Last Sunday*, which features exciting creations in response to the month's current events.

During the pandemic, when long-term care facilities were facing hardship, and measures were put in place to keep vulnerable residents safe, Sum Theatre created *Through the Window*. Last spring, inspired by interviews with residents, Sum Theatre created a performance that was presented in courtyards, parking lots, and streets outside care homes in Regina and Saskatoon.

Congratulations to Joel and the entire creative team at Sum Theatre for their accomplishments and contributing to happy and vibrant communities across the province.

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

Saskatoon Organizations Raise Money for Health Bus

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to highlight another great day in Riversdale. This past summer, Saskatoon Tribal Council in partnership with local philanthropy group Synergy 8 Community Builders, raised \$900,000 for the health bus and the Fred Sasakamoose truck and trailer. Mr. Speaker, this health bus is equipped with dental services, mental health services, and general health services in each of the Saskatoon Tribal Council's seven member First Nations. These can be week-long visits, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last fall I had the privilege in joining the Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health and Mental Health and Addictions, with Troy Davies from Medavie Health Services. It was incredible to meet the staff on the health bus. Mr. Speaker, some of the staff shared so many great stories of the people they had met and treated and how much they love their job.

Mr. Speaker, the bus spent a lot of time visiting communities of Pleasant Hill, Meadowgreen, Riversdale, and more. And I am pleased to say that in the near future we have more of these buses coming to help residents in the province with expanded services, including mental health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Swift Current.

Recognizing Retirement of Swift Current Ophthalmologist

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Dr. Malcolm Banks of the Banks Eye Centre has officially retired after 42 years of serving Swift Current and all of southwest Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, Dr. Banks served as an ophthalmologist for a total of 50 years and performed over 30,000 cataract operations during his time in Saskatchewan.

Dr. Banks was trained as a physician in the Royal Air Force in Britain before turning to eye care. How he ended up in Swift Current after a few brief stints at Addenbrooke's Hospital in England and Jerusalem's St. John Eye Hospital turned out to be

a blessing. What was supposed to be only a year-long appointment in 1980, Mr. Speaker, turned into 42 years. What Dr. Banks saw in Swift Current convinced him to raise a family there and settle down permanently.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Banks credits his amazing long-time staff with his success, but we also know that without his dedication, patience, and skill, it never would have been as successful of a practice as it was.

Mr. Speaker, in the media Dr. Banks says, and I quote, “I’ve had so many cards, gifts, good well wishes from patients. It’s just brought a tear of joy to my eye to know that I’ve affected people’s lives in such a positive way.” Now that he’s retired, Dr. Banks will be shifting the rest of his life to British Columbia.

To Dr. Banks: the city of Swift Current and the entire province of Saskatchewan are so very grateful. We thank you for your hard work, your dedication, and your service to the people of this great province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Lloydminster to Host 2024 Saskatchewan Summer Games

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m pleased to rise today to recognize that the city of Lloydminster will host the upcoming 2024 Saskatchewan Summer Games. The games are an excellent opportunity for developing athletes, coaches, and officials to experience an exciting, multi-sport event. This is in preparation for higher levels of competition, including the Canada Games, North American Indigenous Games, and the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Mr. Speaker, Lloydminster was set to host the games in 2020, but they were postponed and eventually cancelled due to the pandemic. There is significant economic and tourism benefit, with over 5,000 visitors expected. As host, Mr. Speaker, Lloydminster can expect upgraded facilities, new equipment, experienced officials, and a core group of volunteers.

As a major partner, the Saskatchewan Games Council will provide a \$420,000 hosting grant and a \$280,000 legacy grant for infrastructure. This will be the second time Lloydminster has hosted the Saskatchewan Games. Tentatively set for August 2024, the games will involve over 2,000 athletes, coaches, and managers, and Lloydminster will require up to 1,100 volunteers, which I have no doubt they will have no trouble providing.

I now ask all members to join me in wishing Lloydminster the very best as they plan and prepare for the 2024 Saskatchewan Summer Games. Thank you.

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

New Supportive Housing Units in Prince Albert

Ms. A. Ross: — Mr. Speaker, last week I had the opportunity to celebrate the official grand opening of 14 affordable rental units in Prince Albert. The units provide housing for individuals with acquired brain injury, physical disabilities, and other complex needs. Prince Albert Community Housing Society plays a key

role in supporting the development and operation of these units. They also offer in-house supports and work with other service providers to ensure their tenants live as independently as possible.

Mr. Speaker, these 14 units are an important step forward in achieving our government’s goals in the provincial housing strategy to increase housing supply, improve housing affordability, and support individuals and families in the greatest housing need. Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, through partnership with the federal government on the Investment in Affordable Housing Agreement, invested \$918,000 to develop these 14 units. We will continue working with our community partners to ensure that people in need of supportive housing are able to access it in their home communities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking Prince Albert Community Housing Society for their work in developing these 14 rental units and congratulate the tenants on their new homes. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Provision of Mental Health Care

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, this entire session the member for Cumberland has brought stories forward on behalf of Saskatchewan families grieving the loss of loved ones, asking this government to step up with a real plan to save people’s lives, only to learn that the passage of his bill was a charade, a bait and switch from a government that wanted to hand in last year’s half-finished paper for extra credit.

Today there are 800 kids on the wait-list to see a child and youth psychiatrist, over 400 in Saskatoon alone. And yet with this budget, the government chose to decrease the percentage of health budget dedicated to mental health. Why, at a time when so many are struggling, is this Premier sending the message that his government just doesn’t care?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Saskatchewan continues to make substantial increases into the area of mental health and addictions across this province year over year. This year’s budget, Mr. Speaker, is \$470 million for mental health and addictions in Saskatchewan. It is a record amount, Mr. Speaker, and we’re going to continue to make these investments into a number of programs across this province. And I’ve detailed some of these in question period earlier this session, Mr. Speaker, where we’re making these investments.

But we do know that we have additional work to do, which is why we continue to consult with the people across this province, continue to implement some of these programs, expand programs such as mental health capacity building in schools, as an example, Mr. Speaker, of one of several initiatives that are being funded by the Government of Saskatchewan. And we’re going to continue to work to enhance these initiatives across this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

[10:30]

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are losing people to suicide, to overdose. Many thousands more are suffering in silence. And this government fails to acknowledge the reality of the mistakes they've made, of the crisis we are living through in addictions and mental health.

At the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] representative assembly last week, we learned that there is not a single community psychiatrist in Regina accepting new patients. The province is losing the specialists trained here, and people hospitalized with mental illness are left to be discharged with no one to follow up on their care.

We're past tinkering around the edges. When will this Premier acknowledge how badly things are going under his leadership and take action that measures up to the crisis this truly is?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are working to try to address some of the staffing challenges that we are faced with in this province. That's why, Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget we have unveiled a four-point plan to train more health care workers, retain them, incentivize workers as well in this province, and recruit them, Mr. Speaker, to Saskatchewan. What I can say in terms of . . . And we know that we need to attract more of these. And they're very highly sought-after professionals — not just in this province, not just in Canada, but globally, Mr. Speaker.

We have, at last that I checked in terms of the most current information I have, we had 120 licensed psychiatrists in Saskatchewan, 526 FTEs [full-time equivalent] in mental health staff. These are both increases over the past number of years, Mr. Speaker. We're adding 24 more registered psychiatric nursing training seats, for a total of 80 this year, to try to address some of these shortfalls and gaps that we have, Mr. Speaker, so that we can provide these very important services to people across our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Income Support Program

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, until we see results when lives are on the line, that four-point plan is nothing more than empty words.

This government just doesn't care, and that is no more apparent, Mr. Speaker, than when it comes to struggling people, including those relying on the broken SIS program. In estimates, the Minister of Social Services told me that her ministry has a target to kick one out of every four people off SIS this year — not because that reflects how people are doing out there, Mr. Speaker, not because the program is successfully transitioning

them to independence, not for any identifiable reason, Mr. Speaker. Just because. Can this government explain how this makes any sense at all?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, Social Services has programs to assist individuals to overcome their challenges, earn more income, become more self-sufficient, start a career, or participate in their communities and gain independence to the best of their abilities. Mr. Speaker, there is always, each and every year on these support programs, people who transition off because of their circumstances has changed, largely for the better, which is what we encourage. The more that we can encourage and support people becoming more independent is for the benefit of everyone within their community, within the family, and certainly for these individuals.

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

Ms. Conway: — Nice words, Mr. Speaker, but unfortunately that government doesn't track why people transition off the SIS program. Completely out of touch with the reality of struggling people trying to make ends meet.

We are joined today by Frank Francoeur. He's a single dad with two kids in Regina. He was a SaskEnergy employee who fell on hard times, Mr. Speaker. Like so many others, he was transferred to the SIS program. And his income went up on paper, but his actual income went down because he's now paying for his utilities out-of-pocket. He's now expected to live on less than a third of what he was getting on the SAP [Saskatchewan assistance program] program, Mr. Speaker, less than a third to support his family and put food on the table.

And I will remind this government that the SAP program was wildly insufficient to begin with, having not seen a sufficient increase since the year before that party took office. He got behind on his rent. He tried desperately to catch up, but this government refused to work with him. How can this government continue to defend a program that gives people less and is driving families onto the street?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, it's impossible for us to have the case files for each and every individual. However, we can arrange for someone to meet with this individual after question period and hopefully answer his questions or steer him to someone who can.

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

Ms. Conway: — Except this isn't one individual, Mr. Speaker. This is systemic. The Minister of Social Services keeps claiming we don't have a housing and homelessness crisis, and if anyone is struggling, they should just give her a call. Well I did, Mr. Speaker, in March on behalf of Frank. Since then, crickets. No action. And in the meantime, Frank and his two boys have been evicted.

He's tried to work with Regina Housing. He's tried to set up a payment plan. And now he's been evicted. It makes absolutely no sense. Will this government commit to take the necessary steps to ensure that Frank and his two boys keep a roof over their head and remain in their home?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again, for these specific circumstances for an individual case, we will have someone meet with Frank after and hopefully help address his situation or steer him to someone who can talk to him.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Social Services keeps pointing to empty housing units across the province and wonders why we have such high vacancy rates. Could this be related to the ongoing pattern of kicking folks like Frank out when they're not able to scrape by with less? This isn't an isolated issue, Mr. Speaker. Frank is a single dad with two kids in subsidized housing. If he can't make it, who can, Mr. Speaker?

We are also joined by Kelly Anderson, a single mom on SIS who also saw her income cut when she transitioned to the SIS program. She's falling behind on her utility bills. She's worried for herself and her 18-month-old daughter that they'll have their power cut off. If that happens, they'll be on the streets, Mr. Speaker. How does this government expect people in an affordability crisis to get by with less?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, we did increase the amount in the SIS program in this particular budget. It is comparable with other provinces. However if there is special circumstances for Kelly, we will have someone meet with them after question period and steer her toward someone who can give direct answers to her questions.

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

Ms. Conway: — These are not special circumstances, Mr. Speaker. People are winding up on the streets due to the changes under SIS. There may be increases on paper, but folks are getting less. And these people who are here, they have come to their legislature today, can demonstrate that they are getting sometimes upwards of a third less in terms of benefits to put food on the table and to keep their homes heated.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Again, in this budget there was increases for the SIS program both in the basic allowance as well as the shelter allowance, Mr. Speaker. And again we'll have someone meet with Kelly after the question period.

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

Paid Sick Leave and Supports for Employees

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are facing record inflationary pressures, the highest in 31 years. The rising cost of living is hitting families and working people at the pumps and the grocery store. And now they're saddled with increased taxes and utility hikes by this Sask Party government.

We've heard the government say if you're sick, protect your colleagues and stay home. But for many workers in this province who are living paycheque to paycheque, they can't afford to miss even one day of work. They don't have a choice. Does this government understand that asking people to stay home when sick without providing them sick leave — paid sick leave — means asking them to forgo a paycheque during one of the most challenging affordability crises in decades?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Throughout the pandemic our government took steps to make it easier for workers to take time off from work when they were sick. We had a number of things that we did to support those workers. We wanted to make sure that there was no barriers so that they could access programs like the Canada recovery sickness benefit which provided employees up to \$500 per week.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that program may be in the process of running out because the federal government is no longer supporting that. We'd urge the federal government to maybe want to reconsider that. Workers can access WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] benefits. They're equal to 90 per cent of their average net earnings if they contract an illness in the workplace, be that COVID or otherwise. Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that we keep our workers safe and protected, and the Workers' Compensation Board is working to do that. They've accepted a significant number of claims.

Mr. Speaker, our province already offers job protection to employees who have short-term or serious illnesses, and those include 12 days of sick leave, leave for serious illnesses, 12 weeks for personal illness or illness of a family member, 26 weeks for leave for a work-related injury. Mr. Speaker, those are some of the benefits. If the member's got more questions, I'll be glad to provide more.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government needs to stop depending on the federal government to do their work for them.

Mr. Speaker, in this Chamber as MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], we all benefit from having access to paid sick leave. Many of us in this Chamber over the past few months have enjoyed full pay when we're off sick. We find ourselves in a position of which many Saskatchewan families don't have the luxury.

How can we as MLAs tell the people of Saskatchewan that they are undeserving of a benefit that we all have access to? How can Sask Party MLAs in this marble palace tell Saskatchewan

workers, it's good for me, but not good enough for you?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, both the federal government and the provincial government have a responsibility to workers and the citizens of Canada and of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, if the federal government chooses to end a program, terminate a program, or not provide support, we have to look carefully and see what our province can do. But, Mr. Speaker, we're looking at things that ensure that we maintain the 12 days of sick leave, the leave for serious illnesses, and the leave for work-related injuries. We use the benefits of Workers' Compensation Board.

But, Mr. Speaker, right now small businesses right across the country are struggling as we come out of the COVID pandemic. Many of them are facing regulatory burdens, labour shortages, and financial difficulties. We want to make sure that those businesses are able to stay viable, stay operational, and keep meeting the paycheques and payrolls that they have to meet.

This government was happy to announce a market adjustment to minimum wage earlier this year to assist low-income wage earners with challenges related to the rising cost of living. It should be noted that such a change can also increase labour costs to businesses. Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to support those things.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, do you know what helps with labour shortages that the minister references? Decent working conditions — that's what helps with labour shortages.

Mr. Speaker, on the order paper is a bill that would provide working people in this province with 10 paid sick days a year, 14 days when in the middle of a health crisis, to ensure that no worker in this province is forced to make the choice between putting food on the table and compromising the health and safety of themselves and their colleagues. This government has a real opportunity to finally show that they comprehend and care about this affordability crisis.

When my bill is voted on later today, can working people count on government support? Will this government do the right thing and guarantee paid sick leave for all Saskatchewan workers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I made reference to *The Minimum Wage Act* changing in our province and changing the benefits for workers to try and give them a significant increase over a period of time. Mr. Speaker, in the last election, the Leader of the Opposition made a similar promise. Unfortunately the promise that he made was going to be for one year later. So, Mr. Speaker, with the benefits that they get on this side of the House, we're going to be one year ahead of what they would have got on that side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to work to make sure that the workers'

compensation benefits get paid. We're going to make sure that the sick leave benefit stays there, the leave for serious illness is there, the leave for work-related injuries are there. We are going to work with our businesses to make sure that they stay viable, that they stay operational.

And, Mr. Speaker, the benefits that the workers over there . . . or the people on that side of the House may not understand those things. But right now what businesses in our province right now need is an economic environment that fosters economic recovery and growth. We're not going to impose unnecessary liabilities on them. We will work with the employers and make sure that we go forward with this.

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

SaskPower Rates

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's great to hear some recognition from that side that small businesses are struggling, but it's odd then that they're unable to recognize the inflationary pressures on those same businesses. They're ignorant, seemingly, of the impacts that an 8 per cent power hike, another power rate hike, will have on their ability to keep and create jobs.

[10:45]

No relief at the pumps. No affordability rebate to Saskatchewan people. We have folks facing homelessness because they can't keep up with existing rates. People, businesses cannot take another power hike, and it seems like this government just doesn't care. The minister himself knows that the rates are already too high because in the context of business, he said, "We're just more expensive here." Paper Excellence, a job creator in the Trade minister's own backyard, agrees.

Has the government considered and consulted in regards to what this rate hike will do to large employers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we're pleased and very, very happy that Paper Excellence is choosing to do business in our province. It has the ability to reopen a pulp mill that was shuttered under the NDP [New Democratic Party] and remained that way for many years.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have attacked that on social media and continue to attack that. Mr. Speaker, what we have right now is an application before the rate review panel. I won't make any comments on what the work is being done by the rate review panel. But, Mr. Speaker, we will work with the rate review panel. We will review their work when it's done. No decision has been made by cabinet. The application comes forward after it goes through the rate review panel.

But I would say this, Mr. Speaker: Paper Excellence is a complex business. They are both a buyer and seller of energy, because they are recycling the pulp mill that's there, and there's a power purchase agreement that's being negotiated as well. We will

work with them to make sure that they stay viable, unlike the members opposite that are wanting to shred it up and tear it up because they have no respect for business whatsoever.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Not sure about that, Mr. Speaker. But what I am sure about is that there's an 8 per cent power hike being proposed for the next year. And in Saskatchewan we're facing a deeply insecure energy future.

It's great that the minister references the mill because the Paper Excellence mill in P.A. says that they could actually generate more power on-site through biomass than they'll consume. The company says, and I quote: "We believe that collaboration will be essential to prevent large-scale grid defection and an acceleration of pressure on rates."

Instead of raising rates again and again and again, will the government open a call for customer power generation to keep rates low for families, farms, and businesses?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, SaskPower Corporation has a large number of power purchase agreements in place, a number of them ones under discussion, and have a plan and are working forward to do that.

And, Mr. Speaker, one thing we won't be doing is taking advice or direction from the people on that side of the House who are driving businesses away and driving people away from our province, Mr. Speaker. These are people that are not capable of doing that.

Mr. Speaker, we posted last September that this Paper Excellence project was coming back, reopening the pulp mill. That member opposite said, "You do know that this still needs half a billion dollars as of yet unplanned, uncommitted, and untendered work before a single tonne of pulp can be produced."

Mr. Speaker, that's how they treat business, not how we want to treat them on this side of the House. We want businesses to come here, hire people . . . 1,650 jobs that are there. That was when the post . . . And that was the thing that the member opposite was so ashamed of. After she came to her senses she deleted it, Mr. Speaker. She should apologize, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Mr. Speaker, what a serious and thoughtful answer. And you know, I don't need a lecture, nor do I need to lecture the government on utility rates in this province because, Mr. Speaker, they could read some of the submissions to the rate review panel. Some of these submissions provide common-sense solutions to keep utility costs predictable, manageable, and fair.

It's not just me, Mr. Speaker. Paper Excellence, the CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business], CAPP [Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers] — they have

presented numerous concerns to the rate review panel about an 8 per cent power hike the Sask Party cannot seem to justify. Whether northern industry, small business, or working people, this government refuses to see that their decisions are making the affordability crisis worse and putting jobs in the lurch. Seemingly they don't care.

So will the government finally do the right thing and scrap this 8 per cent power hike today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to scrap something that hasn't happened yet. The members want to have some pre-emptory scrapping, sort of like their last election budget.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we're not going to do and we're not going to take advice from them on is dividends that get paid out of SaskPower and our Crown utilities. Mr. Speaker, under the NDP, they were taking 130 per cent of the revenues, applying it to dividends, Mr. Speaker. They were looting the money out of there to try and keep the government going. Mr. Speaker, we will work to make sure that we sustain the viability of Sask Power Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, in our province we've got limited resources. We've got hydro, coal, and natural gas. We will work with some of the other providers to get things that are going that we need to have to make sure that we have good, long-term, sustained baseload power in our province. Mr. Speaker, when it's cold in our province, the last thing we want to have is an NDP government to make sure that no lights came on when you turned the switch. Mr. Speaker, this is Saskatchewan. We're going to look after it.

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

Informed Consent in Mental Health and Addictions Facilities

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week in the Assembly, we've been debating and asking questions on mental health and detox facilities. What policies or work standard procedures are in place to ensure that a person is psychologically stable, cognitively mature, and free from any form of duress so as to ensure they can adequately provide informed consent? Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would be a clinical decision of medical doctors and experts that would decide that, Mr. Speaker, not politicians or people in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, we have spoken many times about the initiatives and the investments that have been made into mental health and addictions across this province, Mr. Speaker — urban areas, rural areas, the North, First Nations communities as well, Mr. Speaker. We know that there are challenges out there, and those have been

exacerbated by the pandemic of course, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we're continuing to make some of these significant investments into these areas to make sure that people across our province have access to support as much as possible. And we know that we have more work to do on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What are the work standards or legislated policy procedures regarding patients on a mental health unit in Saskatchewan? And is it voluntary or involuntary under the Saskatchewan mental health Act at the time of vaccination? Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again these are clinical decisions that are made by doctors and medical experts and those that are trained in the health field, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that supports are available to people across this province, that our facilities are appropriately staffed and that they're able to provide the mental health and addictions services that are required. And these would be decisions that would be made by officials that are directly involved and members and officials within the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority]. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present the fourth report. I move:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies now be concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing

Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 83, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2022* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 83 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 83 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crowns and Central Agencies

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee of Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 82, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2022* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 82 and that

the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted? Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 82 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crowns and Central Agencies

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 44, *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2021* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 44 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 44 — *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2021*

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 44 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 84, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2022* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 84 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 84 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the

Assembly for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Carried on division.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

[11:00]

Small Modular Reactor Technology in Saskatchewan

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a great day to be standing up today and talking about a project that's going to be impacting our province for generations to come. That project, Mr. Speaker, is the future of electrical generation in our province, emissions-free baseload power supplied potentially by small modular reactors. My remarks today, Mr. Speaker, will focus on where we are today and what role the SMRs [small modular reactor] will potentially have down the road.

But before I go into that, it's been a few weeks, but I never had the chance to thank the SaskPower crews that worked through some of the spring storms that we had in the southwest part of the province as well as in the southeast. And I'd also like to, you know, give a shout-out to all the SaskPower linemen and all the other staff that are out there that work hard during the spring and summer months when we get those thunderstorms that roll through and knock out power, and we have . . . You know, those crews are out quite often in the late evening and into the early morning when these storms run through to make sure that the lights stay on and we have power going to our houses, our farms, our businesses.

When we have those storms roll through and we have the power go out, it's a really good reminder that all people really expect, you know, when they come home is to be able to flip on that light switch and the lights come on, and they walk in in the wintertime and their house is warm or maybe, you know, in the summertime, now that we're moving into that season, that their house is nice and cool. So having a stable supply of power throughout the province is critical.

And things are changing, and they seem to be changing at a very, very quick pace, you know. Mr. Deputy Speaker, historically speaking, our province has been reliant on coal for the most part for baseload power. And that baseload power is also supplemented with some hydro, more recently natural gas, solar, biomass, and wind.

In 2021 SaskPower's electrical generation from coal and natural gas was 76 per cent, with renewables making up the remainder. And that includes things like hydro coming from Gardiner dam, the E.B. Campbell dam at Tobin Lake, as well as wind, solar, and biomass.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, emissions expectations are changing, not only here in Canada but around the world. The federal government target of having net zero electrical generation nationally by 2035, you know, it's causing a massive rethink of how we produce emissions-free baseload power to support our residents, our residential homes, commercial and industrial complexes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Conventional coal and natural gas won't be options as we move to 2030, as mandated by the federal government. But I think it's very important to understand that wind, solar, and other renewables are not sources of baseload power. We have short winter days, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have cold winter days. We have days where we don't have sunlight. We have days where there's no wind. We've all experienced in the wintertime where we can go 4, 5, 6 days without a breath of wind in the winter and it's minus 35.

So how are we going to move forward with the development and potential implementation of SMR technology? Well you know, I'm glad you asked. In late 2019 our province, along with Ontario and New Brunswick, began working together to advance SMR technology in our nation with a memorandum of understanding. And the province of Alberta joined on to that MOU [memorandum of understanding] in April of 2021.

March 28th of this year, just a short five, six weeks ago, we took another step as a province toward the development of SMRs and the potential implementation of this technology. The strategic plan for the deployment of small modular reactors was signed by all four provinces. The provinces will work together on the development and deployment of SMR technologies in their respective jurisdictions with a focus on ensuring what's being done is in the best interest of residents, customers, the environment, and of course to ensure SaskPower remains in a strong financial and operational position. The document outlines each province's plan to move forward in the years ahead. Things like emissions, consumer demand and capacities, economic development opportunities, and potential research and development are all covered in this MOU.

Over the next few years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there will be a lot to do in order to get to the point where the final decision is made to proceed with construction. There's going to be extensive and ongoing Indigenous, stakeholder, customer, and public engagement consultations, site evaluation and selection that will determine the best location for an SMR in our province. Technology selection. There are a few different types of SMRs and each have their own, you know, unique characteristics in terms of operation and fuel supply.

There's going to be comprehensive assessment on the business case to support the development and deployment of SMRs in our province. There's also environmental, social, economic, and of course Indigenous impact assessments to be done. All that leads to the preparation, submission, and approval for licences to prepare site construction and operation, ultimately the operation

of SMRs.

But the development and deployment of SMRs is not a quick and easy process, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I can't stress enough that SaskPower will continue to monitor the developments as Ontario Power Generation, or OPG as it's known, develops and deploys the province's first 300-megawatt SMR at its Darlington site, planned for 2028. Since Ontario already has a reactor operating, their development and construction timelines are a little bit shorter as things like appropriate site selection and regulatory licences are already in place at that Darlington site.

Under the strategic plan between the provinces, Saskatchewan will be next in line with an SMR with a final decision expected on whether or not to proceed to be made in 2030. There's lots of factors that go into whether or not an SMR will be developed and deployed in our province. If the project checks all the regulatory and technical boxes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and represents a strong business case for the people of Saskatchewan, construction will begin and an SMR could be put into operation by 2034.

You know, it should also be noted — and there have been some concerns in the past; it just goes with any time you talk about nuclear fuel — it should be noted that the used fuel from SMRs will be stored in Ontario. There's existing facilities already there.

Management of used fuel from SMRs is incredibly important, and SaskPower is going to be working closely with the federal government's radioactive waste policy framework, a not-for-profit organization established and funded by some of our country's leading nuclear electricity producers. Those include OPG, New Brunswick Power, Hydro-Québec, and the Atomic Energy of Canada, or AECL [Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.] as it's known.

It's important that a project of this magnitude . . . It's a huge project that has so much importance to this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. SMRs can provide clean energy to a province that already produces some of the most clean and sustainable agriculture and manufactured products in the world. But also just as important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the energy security SMRs provide to the residents of our province through the use of Saskatchewan uranium and the Canadian technologies as we work to decarbonize our electrical production.

There's so much information I'd like to be able to go into, but my time is limited, so I'll just share this. Growing up, I grew up just downstream from Gardiner dam and I spent many, many summers on Lake Diefenbaker. As a child, I remembered those five giant concrete turbine units at the north end of the dam. We always knew, whenever we took our boat from our cabin at Coteau Beach up the lake, those five large concrete penstocks would slowly appear on the horizon.

Now when you're six, seven years old, they're just these big concrete things at the end of the lake. We didn't really pay much attention to what they actually did. We were just more worried about getting to that pavilion and running across the hot sand to go get some ice cream. That's all we cared about, but we knew we were getting close when we saw those penstocks rise on the horizon. Then there's the spillway and the generating station and all of these large, large pieces of infrastructure.

Living near this dam, which is one of the largest earth dams in the world, was pretty special. And knowing that it took almost nine years to build is amazing in itself, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And when you live that close to it, there's families of people who worked on that project, and there's likely still some around today that worked on that project. And that's what's really, really cool.

And you take the community of Outlook, for instance. Sure, it existed in 1908 when the first settlers came and set up shop, but it was really the construction of that dam that brought workers in from across the prairies and really from all over the country. And a lot of those people never left. They made Outlook and the area around the dam their home. The economic impact of that project was felt back then, and it's still felt today.

And it truly was a project that captured a vision for the future. Aside from the power that is generated at Coteau Creek generation station, the spinoff benefits to the people of Saskatchewan over the last 55 years economically and socially are many. And the jobs it created and still creates to this very day are well-documented.

While a small modular reactor won't have the same, you know, physical footprint as a hydroelectric project the size and scope of Gardiner dam, the end result will be much the same. SMRs have the potential to be part of our electrical generating ecosystem, providing emission-free baseload power to customers across the province.

But in addition to generating clean, sustainable baseload power, I'm proud to say that SMRs fit nicely into our government's plan for growth as we head to 2030. The development and deployment of SMRs will play a role in helping our province deliver on our climate change strategy, Prairie Resilience. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if small modular reactors move ahead and are put into operation, it will support our government's goals of reaching a population of 1.4 million people by 2030, increasing the annual sales of Saskatchewan-mined uranium to \$2 billion annually, support the creation of 100,000 new jobs, and grow our private capital investment to \$16 billion annually. More importantly, the development of this technology will triple the growth in our technology sector and grow Indigenous participation in our province's natural resource sector.

We are adapting, and we're doing things with the goal of enhancing already sustainable and environmentally responsible way of producing goods and commodities for domestic consumption and export purposes to other countries around the world. Our ability to produce high-quality and environmentally sustainable products is in large part to ongoing investments and support in our technology sector.

Mr. Speaker, in the early 1950s our province began work on a project to drought-proof the central part of our province, generating additional intermittent electrical capacity by building a dam, building something so huge in size and scope that our province hadn't ever seen the likes of before. The people that worked on that project had vision and foresight. And I'm proud to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that our government is now doing the same, looking to the future with a vision for clean, emission-free, baseload electrical generation. And SMRs have the capacity that will be needed to supply power to this province for generations to come.

So with that, I'm going to be moving the following motion that reads:

That this Assembly acknowledges and supports small modular reactors (SMRs) as a safe, reliable, zero-emissions energy source to complement renewable energy by providing stable, baseload, clean energy capable of powering Saskatchewan's growing economy and population while creating new opportunities to export Canadian knowledge and expertise around the world.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for your time. I appreciate the opportunity to provide remarks in relation to this motion. And the member is chirping across the way. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[11:15]

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Martensville-Warman:

That this Assembly acknowledges and supports small modular reactors (SMRs) as a safe, reliable, zero-emissions energy source to complement renewable energy by providing stable, baseload, clean energy capable of powering Saskatchewan's growing economy and population while creating new opportunities to export Canadian knowledge and expertise around the world.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina University.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's always a pleasure to be on my feet in this Assembly. Today it's a little questionable, but I am happy to enter into this debate.

And let me start off by saying, you know, how disappointing I find this motion, not because of the content. I actually think this is one of the areas where we have agreement on both sides of the House about the opportunities, the opportunities presented by SMRs in future development for this province.

What I find disappointing is to throw up some backbenchers on a debate aimed at wedging, aimed at creating more division, and aimed at politicizing power generation, energy security, not just in this Assembly but for people in the province. Because while we in this Assembly may actually be in agreement on the opportunities that this presents, as we've canvassed, there are going to be people in this province who don't. There are going to be people in this province who have questions and who have concerns, and the Minister for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation] has committed to the integrity of this conversation, to this process, and to ensuring that it is open and transparent and that there is a fully costed business case and real public engagement because this is too big an undertaking and too important to risk on petty partisan politics.

And you know, unfortunately this is a pattern that we see from this government, a willingness, and a strange one, to try and politicize public services, things that we all rely on and things that we agree on. And it's real unfortunate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because, you know, the member from Martensville tells a great story in this province. He canvasses a lot of the proud history that

we share, but he's forgotten some things as well. He's forgotten that the NDP was critical and proud in the development of the uranium sector in northern Saskatchewan. He's forgotten the important role that our governments have played in the creation and the expansion and the ongoing commitment to those industries, those critical employers, critical employers of Indigenous communities in this province.

And the member from Martensville, while talking, you know, canvassing the Gardiner dam and Diefenbaker, important developments and stories in our province's history, he also conveniently leaves out the dynamiting of sacred Indigenous sites in his telling of that story.

Development in this province has not always happened well. It has not always happened in as inclusive a way as today we might hope for in this province, in as respectful a way as we might hope for, I believe, on both sides of this aisle in the province. And that's why when we have this conversation about SMRs, I'm honestly really not even sure where to enter into this because as I said, we have agreement on the importance of this conversation. We do.

However, to try and politicize this, to try and make this important process of consultation, of development, of what should be a real conversation for the province of Saskatchewan into a political hot potato should be beneath any government and should be beneath a government facing as critical a time as ever when we look at the requirements that we're going to need in this province for clean, affordable power generation by 2035.

And Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll be the first one to admit that not everything here is the fault of the members opposite. You know, let the record show, the federal government has a critical role to play in this conversation. If we are going to be investing in Saskatchewan's infrastructure, in power generation, the best place . . . And you know, the member's holding up the report. I've got it too. I've read it. Yeah, it's all in there. There is an important role for the federal government to be playing in investing in Saskatchewan's energy future because the best place for the federal government to be getting bang for their buck and putting dollars into power generation — clean, secure, reliable power generation — is here in Saskatchewan.

So for this government to try and take this fun 75-minute debate and turn it into a wedge issue for members on this side, but more importantly for members of the public, for people who deserve a real, honest conversation, is disappointing. Because as we know, there's going to be people who hear the word "nuclear" and just go no, no thanks. And those are important conversations, and that's important engagement.

We've seen this happen before. And we've seen real good bipartisan work happen when these conversations, these critical conversations for the province are necessary. And don't get me wrong. Even beyond that fear for folks who grew up with Chernobyl, who grew up with Fukushima, who may hear these things and have concerns, it goes beyond those. This is also a conversation about financial responsibility and the ongoing economic health of this province. We're not sure what this is going to cost, right. This is all largely theoretical at this point.

And as I noted, the minister's committed to presenting a costed,

transparent business case to the people of this province, and I applaud him for that. Because the numbers that are being thrown around are not small numbers even for a government with a \$17 billion annual budget. Numbers being thrown around are \$5 billion — that's a lot of money even for a government — for one, and you're looking at five. That's \$25 billion.

You've just committed \$5 billion to Manitoba Hydro for a power purchase agreement, spent nearly \$2 billion on CCS [carbon capture and storage] down at Boundary 3, and now we're throwing around potentially \$25 billion. I recognize that number may be a bit high. You know, as technologies develop obviously there's the hope that costs go down. But that would lead to potentially a doubling of the current provincial debt, going from this year's \$27 billion and adding potentially another 25 onto that. And of course the provincial debt isn't going to stay at \$27 billion. You know, it's projected to be 30 next year, 35 by 2027.

Beyond the social and the critical environmental elements of this conversation, there is a significant financial element of this conversation which makes this conversation all the more critical that we have in a good way as a province, not in a partisan, wedging way in a 75-minute debate in this Chamber. Because there are a lot of questions that remain. And these are questions that I hope will be answered. These are questions that I hope should be considered. And many of these involve design. Many of these involve licensing. Many of these involve necessary alignment and harmonization of federal regulations.

And you know, we don't even know what this is going to look like. Supply chains are weak right now. Is this an opportunity to further develop the manufacturing sector in Saskatchewan, the expertise in our post-secondary institutions that certainly exists already, but to further that conversation? I think it does. I think it may.

But that is going to require commitment, that's going to require integrity in the conversation, and that's going to require some investment. Because right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have the second-lowest retention of internationally trained students in the country. People come here. They learn. They leave. We see young people leaving this province in droves. Our highest out-migration is from people 18 to 25.

And there are real opportunities here for innovation, for research, for developing industries simply beyond those few jobs that will exist, those important jobs that will exist in power generation.

An Hon. Member: — Good points, Hara.

Ms. A. Young: — Yes, good points, Hara. A weakened supply chain, weak project management, politics focused simply on delivering at any cost, whether that is further division in this province or not, is not on for this side and not on for the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For Saskatchewan to prosper in the future, we need to have the energy abundance that goes with longer, healthier lives. Absolutely nothing to do with

politics, as suggested by the member from Regina University, Mr. Speaker. We need to produce energy that's clean and to participate in the choices we make as communities and as a province.

History has taught us that our energy needs will keep growing as we grow. SMRs provide an opportunity to generate dependable, emissions-free baseload power and the opportunity to expand Saskatchewan's uranium market and allow our province to take advantage of new economic opportunities and increase Indigenous participation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, power production through SMRs would also support our Saskatchewan growth plan by delivering on Saskatchewan's climate change strategy, Prairie Resilience, as well as increasing jobs associated with construction and facility operations, nuclear and non-nuclear supply chains, and research and development. We could achieve all this while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving resilience to the effects of climate change. Existing energy options with high atmospheric emissions are no longer desirable, and the need to reduce environmental impacts is urgent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with new energy options emerging, we owe it to our citizens of Saskatchewan and to the future to consider our options objectively and clearly. Like all commercial nuclear reactors, small modular reactors use fission to generate thermal and electrical energy. They produce zero-emissions power and are designed to be smaller than traditional reactors.

SMRs are scalable and versatile nuclear reactors that typically produce 300 megawatts of electricity or less. A single 300-megawatt SMR will generate enough clean electricity each year to power 300,000 homes. They would be manufactured in factories in modules and then shipped to project sites for assembly, to reduce costs and shorten construction schedules. The SMRs could deliver affordable, non-emitting energy for many new users. They could not only supply power to homes but to offices and businesses, heat for industrial processes, heat to buildings, and energy to produce clean fuels such as battery charging or hydrogen for transport.

The path forward is for the advancement of SMRs and the opportunity they bring as a source of safe and reliable, zero-emissions energy to power our communities while meeting the demands of the growing economy and population. SMRs can improve our quality of life, drive economic growth and prosperity, and help our province and Canada as a whole meet its climate goals. According to the Canadian Nuclear Association, nuclear power is the most efficient power source by land area, and it's more than 15 times more efficient than renewable sources like wind and solar.

[11:30]

SMR deployment in Saskatchewan could also be an important source of new job creation for the province, generating an estimated 100,000 jobs. It would grow private capital investment in Saskatchewan to 16 billion annually and triple the growth of the technology sector. An increase of Indigenous participation in Saskatchewan's natural resource industries could also be attained.

The investment into SMR would generate 1.6 billion in GDP for the province between 2021 and 2032. As Saskatchewan has one of the largest natural reserves of high-grade uranium in the world, with around 85 per cent of production currently being exported internationally, the use of SMRs would increase annual value of uranium sales to 2 billion. Investing in nuclear technology offers further economic opportunities for this important industrial sector.

Mr. Speaker, safety is always a concern when exploring new technologies. Canada's nuclear industry has an impeccable safety track record. It's built on more than 70 years of innovation with safety and environmental protection at its core. Never in Canada has anyone been harmed or injured as a result of this industry's operations. Nuclear plants have many layers of protection, so if there is ever an issue, multiple systems keep the plant safe.

SMRs are an advancement in terms of nuclear power technology and offer even further layers of protection for human safety and the environment. I was surprised to learn, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that nuclear energy has a stronger safety track record than even renewables. Data shows that renewable energy sources such as wind and solar have significantly higher injury rates as well as death rates per terawatt of energy produced.

In 2021, 76 per cent of SaskPower's electricity was generated from coal and natural gas. The use of SMRs would go a long way in decarbonization of electricity production in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a growing international trend towards SMRs. The United States is investing US [United States] 3.2 billion to deploy two SMRs by 2027. The United Kingdom is investing £210 million for SMR research and development by the early 2030s. In addition, China, France, Argentina, Poland, and many other countries are at different stages of developing and deploying SMRs.

We have a window of opportunity to lead as Canada has all the necessary elements: a strong international brand, flexible and performance-based regulator, world-class nuclear laboratories and demonstration sites, a mature supply chain and domestic uranium mining industry, extensive nuclear operating experience, and strong science and technology in these related areas.

SMRs support long-term national energy security using Saskatchewan uranium and Canadian technologies. Ontario would see the first SMR project of 300 megawatts constructed at the Darlington nuclear site by 2028. As well, two fourth-generation advanced SMRs would be developed in New Brunswick. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as these SMRs would be operational before we began, we could learn from their implementation.

As laid out in the strategic plan, SaskPower is to finish the evaluation and make a recommendation, followed by site selection and various regulatory steps. In 2027, the province would send the regulators an impact assessment for the first facility, with the goal of it being approved by 2030. In 2030, the province would then make a decision on whether it should proceed. Construction would begin in 2031, with the first SMR operational by 2034. Three more SMRs would be slated to follow

in stages by 2042.

A preliminary business case will be developed later this year. Part of this business is to look at how these changes would affect people's electrical bills. SMRs take about 12 years to develop, which is why we are laying the groundwork now.

Nuclear energy is completely clean in terms of emissions. Both solar and wind energy are dependent on weather conditions. Nuclear energy could fill the gap with steady, reliable power. Another advantage of SMRs is that they don't need a unique site design. SMRs have a small footprint, standardized parts, and a modular design that would allow scaling the size of the plant toward the local grid needs. That standardization also simplifies training and quality implementation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, SMRs can provide stable baseload clean energy to complement renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, allowing us to build a sustainable and reliable future energy supply in the province. Saskatchewan is well positioned to deploy SMRs for a safe, reliable, and affordable energy future. With that, I support the motion presented by my colleague, the member for Martensville-Warman. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So glad that we can participate in this 75-minute debate here this morning and basically tick the box in terms of a thorough and comprehensive evaluation and policy debate on what is going to commit Saskatchewan people to decades of financial commitment, as we move forward with the need to transition our energy and electricity sector over the coming years.

I mean, I think it's absolutely ridiculous and preposterous to think that somehow having a 75-minute debate on a matter of such crucial significance to every single resident of this province is a disrespectful and dismissive undertaking by a government that feels that they have a degree of entitlement here, that they don't need to justify or explain and commit themselves to a pathway here that has already been presented by the member from Regina University, has not received the adequate scrutiny and policy debate necessary before we can ever move forward.

I've been sitting here listening on this side to the members opposite talk and wax poetic about all of the incredible benefits that nuclear energy can provide. And yeah, happy to have that conversation, but it doesn't replace the rigour and considered consideration that we need to be taking here on what is a massive, massive undertaking and a transformational project for our electricity sector.

You know, the motion that's been presented here talks about how SMRs can complement renewable energy by providing stable baseload clean energy. Well you know, that's certainly something that is very near and dear to my heart. It matters to the people of this province. We know that SaskPower is under the gun to transition off of coal.

The government opposite here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, had run out the clock and ragged the puck on coming up with a plan. And so really what this amounts to is a Hail Mary pass, you know, under

the cover of darkness. We're debating back and forth, you know, and wringing our hands basically on what to do. And so now at the last minute, they've come out with a plan that has not been technologically proven, that has serious concerns around the amount that it's going to cost.

And you know, let's be frank, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We all know that these are best-case estimates and that these projects run over and end up costing far more than whatever that dollar figure is on the baseline.

I mean, this is like roses and sunshine here. And I don't think that it is fair to the public that our government is committing and setting down a pathway towards a project that is going to commit us long term to significant cost commitments and undertakings that have really not had that upfront evaluation to seriously — and I mean seriously — consider whether this is a right path to be going down. I ask the members opposite through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where is the special committee that would give us the time, the information, the access to experts to really, truly understand, not just the merits of this proposal, but the options, the other options that are available to us.?

This is such a loaded motion. This motion talks about the need to provide stable, baseload, clean energy. Well I think that in of itself we could spend days talking about here in terms of what is meant by that term, what has been sort of the past technological basis for baseload power, what electricity grids are going to look like down the road in terms of how that could be supplied.

There are some buried assumptions in this motion that need further scrutiny through a special committee to fully understand and assess whether or not this is the right solution for the right problem. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not have the confidence that this government either understands, appreciates, or has considered what the issue is that they are trying to provide a solve for. And small modular reactors are a solution to a problem that hasn't been quantified in this motion.

It's not possible for us to pass or agree to a motion on such little substance, such little basis here. And I mean, I don't think it'll come as any surprise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that without any of that basis for the motion, you know, I simply can't be committing myself as a representative for the people of my constituent to a motion that is just incredibly, incredibly presumptuous and the underpinnings for which are seriously lacking.

Another point I want to make about this motion is that it talks about Saskatchewan's growing economy and population. And I just find that, you know, it's nice to think that we have a growing population and economy. But you know, as we've seen in the past weeks looking at the negative growth in our economic sectors, that I think there's some, you know, pretty basic critical elements that this government has failed on delivery in terms of growing our economy, growing our population. We have the slowest population growth in the country, and the fundamentals for growing that population and our economy have been broken. We're missing, you know, labour policies that will attract people to our province. We've already talked about people leaving in droves, whether that's international students, whether that's citizens between 18 and 25. There's some fundamental issues here about where we're going as a province and the failures of this government.

When we talk about technologies, or not just technologies but a solution here, you know, where is the value-added? Modular construction means fabrication is happening somewhere else. So where is the benefit here? How are we maximizing it? And how does that compare to other options?

[11:45]

We don't know the answers to those questions because this government isn't providing us with any of that information. Things are happening under the cloak of darkness. We need transparency. We need to have open conversations. We need to have special committees, committees of the whole, that are allowing us to ask the crucial questions about what is going to be in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

And I'll maybe just say finally in my few remaining seconds here that, you know, this is a conversation I'm very open to. I welcome it as someone who has worked in the industry, who has designed nuclear reactors, who has worked in uranium mining, who's overseen governance for the sector. I absolutely think that these are crucial questions we need to be asking and get to the bottom of these matters before we commit ourselves to a path of recklessness and overspending.

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

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. It is my pleasure to support the motion from the member for Martensville-Warman. Mr. Speaker, citizens of Saskatchewan and indeed people around the world have never been more reliant on power.

Electricity impacts every aspect of our lives: heating our homes on cold winter days; cooling our homes on hot summer days; cooking our food and brewing our coffee; preserving our food in fridges and freezers; care and maintenance of our yards; delivering water to our homes; handling our sewage waste water; powering up our televisions, radios, and other entertainment devices; running computers and tablets for home and office; charging our communication devices; powering equipment for contractors and business; heating up block heaters on our vehicles so they'll start on a minus 40 morning; and yes, charging an increasing electric vehicle industry. Without electricity, our modern conveniences are rendered useless.

Mr. Deputy Chair, spring storms in southwest Saskatchewan and more recently in southeast Saskatchewan left thousands of customers without electricity for days, highlighting our dependence on power. Cannington constituency was directly in the path of the Colorado low that brought rain, freezing rain, heavy wet snow, and strong winds that toppled poles and left many without power for over 90 hours and some industrial customers without power for close to a week. I was one of the fortunate ones that regained power in just over a day while neighbours 4 miles away were without for close to two days.

Mr. Deputy Chair, I must give a shout-out to all the SaskPower crews and contractors that worked tirelessly to restore service to everyone in the southeast. Thank you to all. I am thankful the equipment used to replace poles, crossarms, and restringing cables were powered by diesel and gasoline. Otherwise, it would

have been a long drive to find a charging station that actually had power.

This storm was predicted for days ahead and could have been much worse. We made sure we had dry wood inside to heat our home, drinking water stockpiled. Vehicles and tractors were fuelled up, and necessary groceries were purchased. Mr. Deputy Chair, when the power is interrupted, stores can't scan items for sale and fuel pumps won't operate. With all the preplanning we did, we still missed having power. When the power was restored at our yard, my son flipped the switch to turn on the lights in the shop. He turned to me and said, isn't electricity an amazing invention. I replied, it sure is, Thomas. It sure is.

Mr. Deputy Chair, this Colorado low damaged our electrical distribution grid causing outages. Disruptions in our electrical generation capacity would still have the same results for SaskPower customers. Reliability in generation and distribution is what Saskatchewan people want and it's what SaskPower is committed to providing.

As federal regulation is forcing SaskPower to retire coal-fired generation plants prematurely, the search for replacement power generation is ongoing. While wind and solar capacity has been increased and continues to be built and added to the mix of power generation, it is not a reliable baseload power. The wind does not always blow and the sun doesn't always shine.

Hydroelectric generation is also a component of SaskPower's current capacity. Expansion of hydro generation is unlikely given our geography. Geothermal generation is being constructed west of Estevan near Torquay and will provide reliable baseload power when completed, however not enough to replace coal-fired generation.

Replacing our coal-fired generation with a cleaner source of generation that will meet federal net zero emission targets by 2050 is challenging. One of the cleanest forms of generation in the world is nuclear. Large-scale reactors are not practical for our vast province and large distribution grid. Small modular reactors, or SMRs, can be sized for our current needs with additional units added to satisfy our growing needs well into the future.

Seventy-six per cent of SaskPower's electricity was generated from coal and natural gas in 2021. The remaining 24 per cent came from hydro, wind, solar, and biomass. SMRs are a potential source of baseload energy that will help to meet the federal regulatory target of net zero. The governments of Ontario, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, and more recently Alberta have been working together to advance SMRs and their future use in Canada. Small modular reactors are the next evolution in nuclear innovation and technology.

The economic benefits from the growth of SMRs in Canada and around the world will drive increased uranium demand, providing new opportunities for uranium produced right here in Saskatchewan, driving our annual value of uranium sales to \$2 billion.

The province of Saskatchewan already works with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, or CNSC, a world-leading federal regulator, with the operation of uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission will

be responsible for licensing all aspects of a nuclear power reactor: separation, construction, and operation. Along with working with CNSC, we will work with Canada's waste management organization, otherwise referred to as NWMO [Nuclear Waste Management Organization], to ensure safety throughout.

The benefits of working alongside the provinces of Ontario and Alberta and New Brunswick are huge. The shared learning saves money and enhances the development across the country. For example, New Brunswick Power is considering more advanced reactor designs. These designs offer additional benefits such as recycling used fuel from Canada's existing reactors.

In addition to SMRs, there are even smaller versions referred to as micro-reactors that could be utilized in remote locations currently not being served by the power grid. SMRs are typically in the 300-megawatt size. Micro-reactors are 5 megawatts, an appropriate size for our larger industrial developments that are currently using diesel-generated power.

We're committed to ensuring that treaty and Indigenous rights are protected and respected. We're committed to engaging with First Nations and Métis communities on nuclear power. If SMR projects advance to provincial and federal regulatory approval, those Crown decision makers will also have an obligation to determine if consultation is triggered. Given the nature of this project, we anticipate that consultation will be further required.

Mr. Deputy Chair, we know federal regulation will prematurely force coal-fired generation out of existence, with the exception of carbon capture units. To replace this capacity, there is a lot of work to be done.

In order to support provincial decision making, further work is required by the utilities to advance and finalize their project proposals, including completing detailed design, planning, preparation, and licensing with SMR technology developers to meet targeted deployment timelines, refining project costs and scheduled estimates of the selected SMR technologies, confirming the economic opportunities that the selected technologies would provide for Canadian suppliers, engaging with the federal government on funding and other supports, advancing public awareness and engagement, advancing Indigenous consultation and partnerships.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as planning and preparations are made to support SMRs, a decision to implement will not be made until 2029 at the earliest. As work continues to supply Saskatchewan with a safe, clean, and reliable form of electricity, we must ensure that we have thoroughly explored all aspects of nuclear power.

Mr. Deputy Chair, I support the motion from my colleague from Martensville-Warman:

That this Assembly acknowledges and supports small modular reactors as a safe, reliable, zero-emissions energy source to complement renewable energy by providing stable, baseload, clean energy capable of powering Saskatchewan's growing economy and population while creating new opportunities to export Canadian knowledge and expertise around the world.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. You know, I am happy to be on my feet to enter into this debate. And you know, I want to start off by just, you know, echoing some of the words of my colleagues in opposition and also referencing some of the words from members opposite that I've been listening to and drawing some notes.

First of all, you know, as our member from Regina University noted, this is an important topic. There is nothing about this topic that I'm going to stand here and rail against. There are no words from members opposite that I will be, you know, railing against or exposing for saying a disagreement. That's not happening here today. This is an important conversation, and I think in opposition we're really happy to engage in this. We don't think that this should be placed as a wedge issue.

And I want to mention something else that she said, that there are legitimate concerns out there. Some of these concerns are from decades past. And I think that the path forward is through just honest dialogue and education. The path forward to proceed as a province is through education, transparency, and openness. And so that's where I want to start from.

You know, despite some of the rhetoric that gets thrown around in here, we want an economy that supports the well-being of Saskatchewan people. You know, sometimes we hear things thrown around, often from the Government House Leader, that we want to shut the economy down or we want this or that and we talk in hyperbole. And that's just not the case. We want an economy that supports Saskatchewan families, supports good jobs for Saskatchewan people. And a lot of the companies, organizations, folks who we're talking about today, these are good employers who want a bright future for Saskatchewan people. And so we're on board with that. So let's just get kind of get rid of all that.

I'm thankful I haven't heard that in this debate today. It's nice that that hasn't come up yet, and I hope it doesn't come up in the questions because we're certainly wanting to see a provincial economy that is going to grow. And we need to look at ways we can generate energy and jobs in ways that care for our natural resources, that care for our planet, and that have sustainability in mind. And so I think that there's a lot of reasons that we can agree on, that the exploration of this topic is an important one, and certainly we'll be talking again.

So one thing that I do want to start with is that I'll probably have more questions than answers in my contributions today. And my questions start with, which members opposite thought it was a good idea in this motion to highlight some of the most glaring failures of this government?

The motion to me was an odd one to include statements about our growing economy and population when those are two areas for which Saskatchewan is last place in the country. And to me this motion would have had a higher degree of honesty if it had concluded with, you know, wanting to explore SMRs and renewables because we're last place in population growth or

because we're the only economy, the only province in the country, the only jurisdiction in the country that has a declining GDP, the only province in the country with a declining economy three years in a row.

[12:00]

So had this motion read, you know, that the Assembly acknowledges and supports small modular reactors, together with renewable energy because our economy is sinking and this maybe offers opportunity, I would have said, not a bad idea. Okay, like let's use it there. But this motion just doesn't have that level of honesty that I would expect from a motion to be debated here.

So the next question I have, does the government know that the economy is in decline? Because they've put forward a motion that appears that they don't know that. So I think that it's a fair question.

My next question is, does the government know that we have the lowest population growth in the country? Because they've put forward a motion that makes it seem like we're in a population boom, but again we're in last place. So again it struck me as strange that we're going to enter into this debate, but the premise of the debate is missing some factual information.

The next question that I have when I look at this motion is, what is the plan for renewables? So the motion put forward by the member from Martensville-Warman says that SMRs need "to complement renewable energy." And yeah, like, I'm very open to that. I support that approach.

But I guess that, you know, we've seen several announcements on the path forward for SMRs, but I haven't seen the same degree of commitment, both in terms of dollars and planning, you know, and thoughtfulness that goes into improving our reliance or the position of renewable energy in Saskatchewan. And I'm talking of things like wind and solar, geothermal, biomass. There's lots of options, technology that already exists, but I just haven't seen the same degree of investment and thoughtfulness put into that.

And I know that there's some members opposite yelling at me right now, and I really don't know why. Like, you know, I think that these are things that need to be developed in a parallel way.

So I looked at a news story from March 28th that stated that "Currently, 76 per cent of electricity in Saskatchewan is generated by fossil fuels, according to the province." And the minister was asked, you know, how much will SMR technology be able to bite into that amount, you know, when this timeline does come to fruition? And I was disappointed that the minister didn't really have an answer. So I'll quote here from the story:

Asked how big a role 1200 megawatts of nuclear energy could play in satisfying future energy demands including an uptake of electrical vehicles . . .

That they've already added new taxes to prevent that uptake, but Minister . . . I'm quoting here:

. . . Morgan said the province will require multiple forms of clean energy production to hit emissions targets while

meeting need.

So that's not really an answer. I think that what we need to see is a plan. How much energy, percentage-wise, will this provide to reduce and eventually eliminate our dependence on burning fossil fuels for energy?

I also note, I read through the SaskPower website, and they do comment on here, like I'll quote directly: "With a costly construction price tag, nuclear energy can be an expensive energy source."

And in the previous news story that I was referencing, the minister talked about \$5 billion for a reactor. As the member for Regina University stated, that's not a small amount of money. So what I'd like to see, to be more comfortable as this exploration proceeds, is a bit of a, you know, cost-benefit analysis including comparison to other existing forms of energy so we know that the jobs created by this exploration, by the construction, will be for the benefit of Saskatchewan people.

And that leads me maybe to my final question. Is this the best investment that we can make to help Saskatchewan work towards a sustainable future? Is this the best investment? I am open to this as a potential answer to that. But that's what I'd like to see from the government to ensure that this is the best use of public funds to move towards a sustainable future for Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The 65-minute period has expired. The 10-minute period of questions and answers will now begin. I recognize the member from Regina University.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As we've talked about, \$5 billion sure is a lot of money, especially when you potentially multiply that out by five SMRs being kicked around by this province. So to the member from Regina Northeast, how many federal dollars has his government secured so far for the development of these projects?

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

Mr. Grewal: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is proud to be one of four provincial governments in Canada that are leading the charge to make small nuclear reactors a reality. Members opposite politicize everything that comes on this floor, whether it's affordability, addictions and mental health, protection for seniors, COVID responses. Every positive step taken by this government is politics to them, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Given the federal government's intent to have all electrical generation net zero by 2035, we believe that the development and deployment of small modular reactors can be a great solution to provide clean and reliable baseload power to the people and businesses of Saskatchewan. SaskPower is doing excellent work on navigating the regulatory and . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Next question, please. I recognize the member from Moose Jaw North.

Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 2020, Dr. Esam

Hussein, the current dean of engineering and applied sciences at the University of Regina, had this to say about nuclear energy in Saskatchewan, and I quote:

Small modular reactors can support sustainable development by economically providing reliable base-load electricity, curtailing greenhouse gas emissions and enabling social justice by supplying energy to isolated and deprived communities and those with limited financial means.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on this side of the House we listen to the experts. To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: why don't you agree with Dr. Hussein and our government that SMRs are a reliable way to provide clean baseload electricity to Saskatchewan people?

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Happy to take the question from the member opposite. Dr. Esam Hussein, who is the former dean of the college of engineering at the University of Regina, is somebody who I hold in high esteem. I consider him to be a colleague of mine. I was very, very, very pleased to be able to sit on their board and have many conversations with Dr. Hussein about many topics around Saskatchewan's energy future.

And so I think that, you know, the information that experts provide is exactly the kind of information that should be coming to a special committee so we can have informed debate and conversations about the options before us.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Can the member for Cannington tell Saskatchewan people what the overall cost of this project will be and how much has the government costed to be spent before a decision will be made to proceed in 2030?

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

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are cautious estimates, and we expect the cost to decrease with subsequent SMR builds across Canada. While SMRs have a higher capital cost upfront, they can operate for well over 60 years. Solidifying the business case is one of the activities that SaskPower will be undertaking over the next few years. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We heard just a couple of minutes ago from the member from Regina University that \$5 billion is a lot of money. Well the NDP-Liberal federal government's \$5 billion green bond initiative excludes nuclear projects as applicable funding, an insult to the thousands of workers in the industry in Canada and Saskatchewan.

So to the member from Regina University: will you commit today to finding the courage to stand up to Justin and Jagmeet, your federal leaders, and tell them that excluding nuclear projects from other clean energy alternatives is wrong? Or once again will you abandon the people of Saskatchewan?

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's clear that the member from Walsh Acres can't hear from way back in that far corner, because I said exactly that in my opening remarks. There are federal tables open right now for those conversations. And we need federal investment, absolutely. Should the feds be at the table with the Government of Saskatchewan? Absolutely. What's unfortunate is that the Government of Saskatchewan won't go to the tables to fight for the taxpayers and ratepayers of Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Saskatchewan is leading the nation in per capita greenhouse gas emissions. Considering this technology won't be available for a decade, can the member for Regina Northeast tell us what, if anything, his government plans to do in the meantime?

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

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to thank the member opposite for the question. As we move forward with the development and eventual deployment of SMRs in Saskatchewan, we know that having a plan for the disposal and storage of used fuel is very important. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government and SaskPower will work closely with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the Nuclear Waste Management Organization of Canada to ensure that used fuel from Saskatchewan SMRs is managed safely. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I can't express how surprised I was only moments ago to hear the member from Regina University profess her support for SMRs while her leader, the Leader of the Opposition, has consistently come out against nuclear energy as an option for Saskatchewan. I quote him here: "We can and should say no to the development of nuclear reactors, uranium refineries, and storage of nuclear waste in Saskatchewan. Nuclear power is not and can never be clean energy."

As we can see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the opposition doesn't think nuclear energy is even a clean energy source — just more lack of research and outdated science from the members opposite. To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: why don't you and your leader support nuclear energy and this government's initiatives to build SMRs?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from

Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Ritchie: — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't know if the members opposite have really been listening to what I've been saying so far in this debate, but I'll just take a moment to remind the members opposite that, you know, I'm very proud of my work in the industry.

I'm proud of the fact that when I graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a degree in chemical engineering, that I worked in a research facility researching uranium and nuclear reactors, that following on that, I had the distinct honour to work for the Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. designing nuclear reactors. But I'll go back to what I said earlier. We need to be doing the upfront analysis to look at the options to find the most cost-effective solution . . .

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, it started out pretty nice here, but as we've seen, just nothing but drive-by smears and cheap politics from the members opposite. So here's a real question, because on this side of the House, we actually think this is an important conversation.

By 2035 we're going to need 4500 megawatts of energy being generated in this province, by that government's own numbers. We're currently sitting at just around 3900. Even with the SMRs that they're proposing to meet the plan for growth laid out by this government, they're going to need hundreds more in megawatts. So, Mr. Speaker, to the member from Regina Northeast, what's the plan?

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

[12:15]

Mr. Grewal: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to renewable energy, when . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Agreed. However . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The 75-minute debate period has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 606 — *The Saskatchewan Employment (Paid Sick Days) Amendment Act, 2021*

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. It is my duty pursuant to rule 27 to advise the Assembly that this item of business has been previously adjourned three times and cannot be further adjourned at the conclusion of the debate or at the normal time of adjournment, whichever is reached first. Every question necessary to dispose of that motion shall be put. I recognize the member from Saskatoon University.

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege and my honour to rise once again today to speak to our private members' bill, Bill 606, which has been advanced with the objective of providing crucial support for all Saskatchewan workers. Mr. Speaker, when Saskatchewan workers . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I'll just remind the member that she is closing debate.

Ms. Bowes: — Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when Saskatchewan workers become ill, far too many are faced with a very difficult choice: do they stay home for their own health, the health of their co-workers, and the well-being of the public they serve? Or do they force themselves to go into work because they work for an employer who does not offer paid sick leave and because they simply can't afford to stay home and lose a day's pay?

We know this is the unacceptable reality for far too many Saskatchewan workers. It is a reality that leaves many working people struggling just to stay afloat, never mind to thrive. It's a reality where workers are unfairly forced to make the impossible choice between their financial survival, their health, and the health of those around them.

These are the very same workers who, in the midst of the largest, most disruptive, and ongoing pandemic, have proven they are essential to Saskatchewan's economic success. Every day for over two years now, they have left the safety of their homes and dutifully reported to their jobs — store clerks, gas attendants, and janitors, food servers, educational assistants, care aides, and so many others — so that we could all continue to live our lives and so that our economy was able to function.

To these workers we say, thank you. To these workers we say, you are important and we recognize that your efforts and your labour are essential to our province's recovery. But most importantly, Mr. Speaker, beyond all the thanks and the many platitudes, we say to Saskatchewan workers, you deserve the dignity of paid sick leave, and we will make this a reality for you.

Mr. Speaker, this is what responsible, forward-looking governments do. They protect their workers' rights to safe and healthy working conditions. They see workers not as a tool to be exploited, but as human beings deserving of dignity and fair treatment, and they treat these workers as an integral part of our province's economic structure. Our legislative amendment accomplishes this by creating new employment standards for employers and workplaces in order to relieve workers of having to make the impossible choice between losing pay or working while sick. Paid sick leave will be available so that when a worker is feeling unwell they know they will not be made to suffer financial hardship when they make the responsible choice to stay home.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that many Saskatchewan people work in unionized workplaces with access to paid sick time. We thank the labour movement in Saskatchewan for fighting for and negotiating these benefits on behalf of their members. We have some of those labour leaders here today with us, and I want to acknowledge their presence and thank them for coming for this important vote today.

Mr. Speaker, some non-unionized workers also have paid sick time provided as a benefit by their employer. To those employers who, of their own initiative, have recognized this need and done the right thing by providing paid sick leave for their workers, we express our gratitude to you as well.

However we also know, Mr. Speaker, that access to paid sick leave in our province is far from universal. Less than half of Saskatchewan's workers have access to paid sick leave when they become ill, need to recover from minor injury, or need to self-isolate due to exposure to COVID-19 — the responsible thing to do. Often these are our province's lowest income workers.

Mr. Speaker, many of these underpaid and under-protected workers are the very same workers who have been lauded as the pandemic's front-line heroes: care aides, health sector workers, cashiers, cleaners, servers, and so on — the very people who have kept our economy functioning, Mr. Speaker, reporting to their jobs and risking their well-being so that Saskatchewan people could continue to access important and essential services.

Mr. Speaker, the government's measures to assist these workers during the pandemic by providing unpaid days of leave for isolation, quarantine, or to care for dependents have clearly not been enough. The truth is that Saskatchewan has been a laggard on this front. Numerous provincial and territorial jurisdictions implemented government-funded paid sick leave policies to address the gaps that exist in the federal programs. Some provinces provided financial support to help employers who offered paid sick leave programs. Saskatchewan was not one of these jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, from an economic perspective, there are clearly many reasons why paid sick leave is a benefit, not a drain, for employers. Employers benefit from having healthy employees. Some of these benefits include improved attendance among colleagues who are less exposed to contagion; reduced absences for sick workers themselves due to faster treatment and better prevention; reduced presenteeism, where workers attend work when they are unable to fully perform their duties, thereby negatively impacting productivity; better staff recruitment and retention; enhanced business reputation; more profitable macroeconomic conditions; and stronger public health outcomes, particularly during a pandemic, Mr. Speaker. Paid sick days save lives.

Mr. Speaker, we also know the most common reason workers choose to go to work sick is because their employers do not offer paid sick days. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that employees who are unable to take time away from work to recover from sickness or injury return to full capacity sooner and healthier, and whenever a worker goes to work sick, there is a cascading impact. Sick workers are not productive workers. Sick workers do not get well faster, and even worse yet, sick workers spread their illness among other workers and to customers. So we can see that paid sick leave is more than a tool for infection control. It is also about creating workplaces that are healthy and economically proficient.

Our economy suffers too when workers can't access paid sick leave, Mr. Speaker. Household consumption declines when sick employees lose a day's pay, earnings which cannot be replaced. Mr. Speaker, we are not better or stronger as a province, our

businesses do not succeed, when being sick means Saskatchewan workers are forced to choose between the barest of essentials: buying groceries to feed their families or making their rent payments and avoiding eviction.

Let me also be clear, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition is not without understanding for employers. We know that running a small business is tough. We know that managing costs, even outside a pandemic, can be difficult. We know that Saskatchewan employers have felt a deep economic bite these past two years due to the pandemic. Helping these local enterprises succeed is essential to our province's well-being, and we maintain this government needs to do more on this front.

Yet even as we understand the challenges faced by our small-business sector, we are acutely aware that failing to legislate paid sick leave unfairly places the well-being of our economy on the shoulders of the worker, not just during this pandemic but every day. Our government must not build the success of our business sector off the backs of sick Saskatchewan workers who can't afford to take a day off to recuperate when they're ill.

Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. Paid vacation days and public holidays are a commonplace, government-mandated, employer-paid expense. Mandating employer-paid sick leave makes even more business sense. Paid sick leave must be a standard tool for creating healthy workplaces, for shaping a business environment that attracts the best employees, and where workers and business are both able to contribute to our province's economic recovery and future growth.

Mandating paid sick time also levels the playing field for those employers who are already providing sick leave, paid sick leave, to their employees. Our government must support progressive employers who are doing their part, Mr. Speaker, not employers who deny sick leave benefits to their employees as a means to cut costs.

We also know lower income workers make up the majority of workplaces where paid sick leave is absent, Mr. Speaker. Women, immigrants, and young adults are often those who are employed in these positions. Many times these workers are single parents or come from low-income families responsible for caring for children at home. Mr. Speaker, paid sick days are a key component of an equitable approach to decent work, especially for the most marginalized in our province. Many employers, large and small, have already chosen to create these healthy workplaces. They view providing paid sick leave as a pathway to their business success. They have consciously made respect for their employees' right to a healthy work environment a fundamental part of their business culture.

Indeed most countries around the world provide some form of paid sick leave. Some are incredibly generous, with Denmark providing 30 days of paid sick leave and Germany providing a full six weeks. Even in the United States, the hotbed of free enterprise and capitalism, Mr. Speaker, 16 states and at least 23 cities and counties have enacted paid sick days and/or medical leave, and legislation is pending in several additional jurisdictions. Contrary to paid sick leave opponents' dire warnings, in New York city, Seattle, and San Francisco, 86 per cent of businesses surveyed indicated their approval.

Mr. Speaker, in return for providing paid sick leave for their workers, employers have benefited from increased productivity as well as loyalty from their employees. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has reported that paid sick leave policies implemented in cities like San Francisco and New York show that workers were not abusing sick leave policies and that costs to employers were minimal. At the same time, this research showed that paid sick leave benefited individual workers and their families immensely, Mr. Speaker.

Further to this, recent research right here in Canada, from the Centre for Future Work, has found that a proposed 10-day paid sick leave policy in British Columbia would increase overall business costs by just 0.21 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and that this will have no measurable impact on overall competitiveness or profitability. These findings completely discredit unsubstantiated claims from business lobbyists that 10 days of employer-paid sick leave would lead to widespread bankruptcies and job losses.

Mr. Speaker, it's time for this government to step up and show leadership in implementing this key element of progressive labour policy. This amendment crucially builds a stronger, more robust system of protections for our workers. This amendment further represents a long-term, comprehensive, and equitable policy solution that shifts us toward an economy where workers will be enticed to move to our province and join our workforce. Finally, Mr. Speaker, this amendment represents a progressive economic future for Saskatchewan and for all people we have been elected to serve.

And so, Mr. Speaker, given that there is a vote which we are all very eager to get to, I will conclude my remarks. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member from Saskatchewan university, that Bill 606, *The Saskatchewan Employment (Paid Sick Days) 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 Deputy Speaker: — Those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

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

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — Recorded division has been requested. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 12:28 until 12:30.]

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member for Saskatoon University that Bill No. 606, *The Saskatchewan Employment (Paid Sick Days) Amendment Act, 2021* be now read a second time. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

[Yeas — 10]

Meili	Wotherspoon	Sarauer
Conway	Love	Ritchie
Beck	Mowat	Bowes
A. Young		

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

[Nays — 39]

Stewart	McMorris	Reiter
Merriman	Harpauer	Morgan
Duncan	Tell	Wyant
Makowsky	Docherty	Cheveldayoff
Bradshaw	L. Ross	Eyre
J. Harrison	Hindley	Marit
Buckingham	Fiaz	Lambert
Bonk	Kirsch	Steele
Ottenbreit	Francis	C. Young
A. Ross	Lawrence	Skoropad
Meyers	Friesen	Grewal
McLeod	Goudy	Keisig
Jenson	D. Harrison	Domotor

Procedural Clerk (Ms. Drake): — Mr. Speaker, all in favour of the motion, 10; all opposed, 39.

The Deputy Speaker: — I declare the motion lost. I recognize the House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:34.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

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

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

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Social Services

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Education

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Energy and Resources

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

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

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

Hon. Warren Kaeding
Minister of Environment

Hon. Gene Makowsky
Minister of Advanced Education

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

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

Hon. Paul Merriman
Minister of Health

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

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

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

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

Hon. Gordon Wyant
Minister of Justice and Attorney General