



THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
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authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
3rd 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 — Carla Beck

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

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

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

Deputy Clerk — Iris Lang

Principal Clerk — Kathy Burianyak

Clerk Assistant — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Sean Darling

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker: — After debate on the address in reply concluded on November 3rd, 2022, the opposition leader raised a point of order stating that the Premier had deliberately misconstrued a statement made by the member from Saskatoon Nutana. I deferred my ruling so that I could review the record, and I am now prepared to make my ruling.

It is apparent from the interventions of the two House leaders that we have before us a clash of interpretations of the quoted passage. It might be useful to remind ourselves that the purpose of debate is to present opposing viewpoints. Debate is the critical analysis of opposing points of view, usually made up of arguments and disagreements of facts. Beauchesne's point out that sometimes the House must accept two contradicting accounts of the same incident.

In the past, Speakers have pointed out that it is not the duty of the Chair to verify the accuracy of anything said in debate, nor is it the duty of the Speaker to decide whether the comments of a member have been misquoted or misrepresented. If that were the case, the Speaker would need an army of fact checkers.

Our own rule 54(1) considers the possibility that a member's speech might have been misquoted or misunderstood and provides a means for the member to correct the record. Disagreements such as the one raised in this point of order are part of the cut and thrust of debate. For that reason I find the point of order not well taken.

Before closing, I have two further points to make. First I want to caution the Opposition House Leader, who said that the Premier deliberately misconstrued the statement. It is out of order to make a personal charge or accusation against another member, except by way of substantive motion. I extend that caution to all members because there were a few instances last week where members forgot about the particular rule.

Secondly, as I said, it's not the Speaker's job to verify what is said in speeches. This ruling should not be interpreted to suggest that anything goes in debate. I want to remind all members once again that their own code of conduct states, and I quote, "To our colleagues in the Assembly we owe loyalty to shared principles, respect for differences, and fairness in political dealings." I ask members to conduct themselves accordingly during debate.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms

The Speaker: — I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Lyall Frederiksen, who is seated on the Chamber floor with us today. Lyall will fill the position of Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms. Lyall has been an employee of the Legislative Assembly since March 2020. He was a member of the Royal Canadian

Mounted Police from 1991 to March 2020. All his policing service has been done in the province of Saskatchewan at a variety of locations. He retired from the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] at the rank of staff sergeant. Welcome, Lyall.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce two ladies that are seated in your gallery. Unfortunately, there was two more that are part of this program that couldn't make it, but I'd just like to introduce to you two ladies that will be launching an initiative later on this afternoon that they were instrumental in. Their stories are inspirational.

I'm so proud to be able to stand here today and introduce: first of all, Marlene Bear comes to us from Prince Albert and is a member of the Flying Dust First Nation; and also Myrna LaPlante lives in Saskatoon and is from the Day Star First Nation. Also, Mr. Speaker, who couldn't be here but are instrumental in the program too are Lori Whiteman and Autumn LaRose-Smith.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to be hearing more about the work that these two ladies — all four ladies — have done in a member's statement later on today, and an announcement, as I said, around 3 o'clock on the actual initiative. So I'd like all members to welcome these two ladies to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to join the minister in welcoming these ladies into their legislature. It's always wonderful to see First Nation women come into this gallery and to be part of. And it's also extra special for me as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] to have one of my constituents here, and that's Myrna LaPlante. Welcome. And I say to the women here, welcome to your legislature.

And while I'm on my feet I would also like to welcome other guests in this gallery. To you and through you, I'd like to welcome First Nation leaders from Fishing Lake First Nation, Kawacatoose First Nation, Cote First Nation, and the Anishinabe Nation authority, as well as the UR NDP [University of Regina New Democrats] Indigenous sovereignty group to their legislature. Thank you.

Oh, and I also do apologize because he's not sitting up there in the same section as the others, is a councillor from Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Devin Bernatchez. I chopped up his name. Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

I join with the member opposite in welcoming the leaders from a number of First Nations — Fishing Lake, Kawacatoose, Anishinabe, Lac La Ronge, and also Cote First Nations — for being here today, Mr. Speaker. I know they raise very good points, some that we may be even debating later on today, Mr. Speaker. But I welcome them to their Legislative Assembly and say that they're welcome here at any time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join in with the Minister of Government Relations as well as the members opposite to welcome the chiefs in the west gallery, but mostly George Cote, chief of Cote First Nation. Now George has been chief . . . I think this is his third term. Quite a history in Yorkton, a great community leader by any measure. In his years in Parkland Housing he did some great work. He's also a great son to his mom, I know that for sure. He's a great father and a grandfather and a very good friend as well, Mr. Speaker. And I just ask all members to join me in welcoming my brother from a different mother but the same father, Chief George Cote.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to stand and join with the members, Mr. Speaker, in welcoming Chief Cote, Councillor Bernatchez, and the leadership here today to their Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. We were very happy to have them join us today. I know many folks braved some terrible roads to get here, and we want to say thank you and welcome to your Assembly.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also introduce a couple of guests in the east gallery. First, I see up there Evan Brick, a political science student at the University of Regina, a keen follower of politics, active in many levels, and I want to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly. He's keeping good company today, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to welcome Kent Peterson, recently re-elected to his position as secretary-treasurer of the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] and a regional VP [vice-president] with CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees]. Of course, I'm sure his time and his thoughts have been occupied with the goings-on in Ontario in recent days — shocking events, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome both of them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan].

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the member opposite in welcoming these individuals to the legislature. I've known SameOldKent, as his Twitter handle is, for some years and have enjoyed his company. We certainly don't agree on a lot of things but I know that the work that he does is with the best interests of the workers in our province. And for that I commend and thank him, and would ask that all members on both sides of the House welcome him to the legislature today.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to welcome a guest in your gallery today, Mr. Grayson Beaudin. Grayson is a teacher shaping young hearts and minds of grade 7, 8 students at École College Park in Saskatoon. He is also a disc golf enthusiast. If you don't know what that is, feel free to ask him after the fact. He loves to play board games and tinker in the garage, and he is of course my partner in this thing called life.

And I want to thank him for joining me here today. We always say that we can't do this without our partners, so I know members from both sides of the House have heard me speak at length about him. He doesn't know all the things I've said about him in here because he doesn't read *Hansard*. So I want to take this opportunity to say thank you for all of your support and ask all members to welcome him to this Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a Saskatoon MLA and former Education minister, I'd like to welcome Grayson to the House and thank him for the good work that he's doing. The member opposite refers to the hearts and minds of our students. We also look towards good work being done with their educational background so that they come out of our schools well prepared to go to work in our province, Mr. Speaker. So I thank him for being here today and thank him for the continuing good work that they're doing.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to welcome Chief Derek Sunshine from Fishing Lake First Nations. He's helping us to understand the addictions and mental health issues as well as working with a number of communities in the area, and we really appreciate your leadership. Thank you and welcome, Derek Sunshine.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To join in on welcoming those in the gallery. But I guess in the Speaker's gallery I'd like to welcome Devin Bernatchez, Lac La Ronge Indian Band councillor, but also for many years was my CA [constituency assistant] and did a great job. And I just want people to realize — and I've said this before; I've had the opportunity to introduce Devin — Devin has a heart of gold when it comes to our young children, the youth hockey, sports. It doesn't matter.

He's always doing his part as a community member, as a community leader, to make sure the youth are going in the right direction. And he loves sports. He's very competitive. And he really instills that in everyone. His son's an excellent golfer. You know, I try to say Devin, you are the one that has given, you know, your young son opportunity to be a golfer, but I think it's the wife, actually.

But anyway, I just want to welcome Devin to his Assembly, and you know, just to have all of us welcome him and say thank you for all that you do. Your heart's in the right place. Keep doing

what you need to do and speak your truth. So with that I just welcome you to your Legislative Assembly.

While I'm on my feet I would just like to welcome one more person from home. If I didn't, I would probably get heck. Brandi, it's nice to see you here to your Legislative Assembly, and I welcome you on behalf of Cumberland to your Assembly. It's nice to have you here.

So with that I just ask everyone to please welcome these guests.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm on my feet to recognize another strong Indigenous woman in our midst. That's Marissa Knudson, Marissa Kakakaway, Marissa Rockthunder. She goes by a few different names, so I wanted to get them all in here.

[13:45]

Marissa is an award-winning student at the University of Regina. She's very active in the Indigenous New Democrats of Saskatchewan. She's a constituent, a resident, a proud resident of North Central, and a loud advocate for community in that area and an inspiration to me indeed, Mr. Speaker. She's been known to answer phones and do casework in our office, and I know that she is going to continue to do great things. So I wanted to welcome Marissa to this, her Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I want to welcome Willard Young, who's seated in the west gallery here today. Willard served his community, Fishing Lake First Nation, as a councillor for over 30 years. I got to know Willard and his family over 20 years ago when I taught his son here in Regina.

Willard is a farmer, a proud councillor, and a tremendous hockey player as well, Mr. Speaker, and it's a pleasure to have him here in his Assembly. I ask all members to welcome Willard Young to his Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be presenting the following petition. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the first right of refusal needs to be offered to First Nations in the treaty land entitlement process when Crown lands are being sold off; this government has been breaching the treaty relationship and restricting access to traditional hunting, fishing, trapping, and medicine picking; and this government has been leaving the taxpayers of this province footing the bills for its mistakes and losses in courts; and this government has been auctioning off Crown land and leases to the highest bidder; we only have 10 per cent of Crown land left in this province.

I'll read the prayer:

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

The signatories to this petition reside in Loon Lake and Duck Lake. I do so present.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to stop the closures at Wilkie and District Health Centre. These individuals wish to bring to our attention that the Saskatchewan Health Authority is unable to provide reliable and consistent health care services in Wilkie; that the health centre emergency department has been regularly closed for years; and that several rural communities rely on Wilkie and District Health Centre for health services and the hospital is a key component to the economic vitality of the region.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to stop closing emergency department and outpatient services at Wilkie and District Health Centre.

The individuals who have signed this petition today, Mr. Speaker, reside in Wilkie and Scott, Saskatchewan. I do so present.

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

Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that the Liberal-NDP [New Democratic Party] federal government continues to infringe on the constitutional rights of the province of Saskatchewan and implement policies that are detrimental to our province's economic well-being; that the commitments and the actions of the federal government have made the control of Saskatchewan's resource rights unclear; that an unsupportive federal government will continue to impede Saskatchewan's potential to play a global role in providing resources to the world market.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to implement Saskatchewan-first policies and legislation that will support the development of Saskatchewan as a global supplier of food, fuel, and fertilizer without federal infringement on Saskatchewan's constitutional authorities.

The signatories of this petition are from Oxbow, Alida, and Carnduff. Thank you.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to be on my feet again today presenting a petition to this Assembly calling for the funding of in vitro fertilization. I've been on my feet a few times for this petition and I look forward to rising as many times as I'm able to present this because, no exaggeration, we have a stack of petitions in our office that is inches and inches high. And I would say to the government that this is an issue that crosses partisan boundaries. This is something that people from every corner of the province care deeply about.

One in six couples in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, will struggle with infertility, and we know the value and the love that we place on children and our own families. And I believe the signatories of this petition, we on this side of the House believe that we should be doing everything that we can to help people grow their families here in Saskatchewan. It's the right thing to do and it makes economic sense as well, Mr. Speaker.

Other jurisdictions in Canada do have programs that offer financial assistance to couples trying to conceive. And boy, do I hope, and the signatories of this petition hope, that members opposite will hear these and consider doing something to help those many, many families struggling to be.

I'll read the prayer:

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

Signatories of this petition . . .

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling for universal access to birth control. The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan has some of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the entire country — that's ages 12 to 20 years old; that cost is one of the biggest barriers to accessing contraceptive birth control in Saskatchewan, especially among adolescents; that having consistent and affordable access to contraceptive options is essential for promoting bodily autonomy, preventing unwanted pregnancy, and saving money on sexual and reproductive health care; and that sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights.

I'll now read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to adopt a policy making no-cost prescription contraceptive available to all Saskatchewan people.

Signatories of the petition today reside in Central Butte and Saskatoon. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Walk for Reconciliation

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Friday, September the 30th was the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada, Mr. Speaker. My wife, Krista, and I had the great privilege of participating in a walk for reconciliation that actually began on the Thursday previous. The overarching goal was to create a healing journey for people who are facing very serious challenges in their life. Participants also wanted to show their support for the communities of James Smith Cree Nation as well as the village of Weldon, and about 40 to 50 people took part in the walk.

The walk was organized by one very energetic and enthusiastic Connie Primeau alongside Sandra Greyeyes and Claudia Cooke, and it started at the Mistawasis First Nation on Thursday night. Many participants spent the evening in the Shellbrook campground. And the next morning there was breakfast served by the Shellbrook Hospital staff, and then the walk continued to the Shell River bridge just outside of Prince Albert. From there, participants were transported to Prince Albert for supper at the East End Hall. They were served there by the Métis Women of Saskatchewan, where they were joined by the member for Prince Albert Northcote, and then on to the Truth and Reconciliation events on the riverbank in Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, Krista and I were grateful to have the opportunity to take part in the walk, to listen and to learn, as well as to meet so many wonderful people. Mr. Speaker, once again I want to thank Connie Primeau and all of those who had a hand in organizing and then participating in the walk. And thank you as well to Chief Daryl Watson for his leadership, and thank you to the entire membership of Mistawasis First Nation.

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

Protection of Treaty Rights

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to give a special thank you to the following nations: Carry The Kettle, Waterhen Lake, Witchehan Lake, Pasqua, Ochapowace, Cumberland House, and the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, these nations have been calling on this government to stop breaching the constitutionally protected treaty rights in this province. They have sent numerous correspondence imploring this government to stop infringing on their treaty rights and to consult them in a meaningful way. These repeated requests have been ignored by this government.

Mr. Speaker, because these nations have been ignored by this government, they have chosen to take this government to court and they are winning, Mr. Speaker. We will see more nations stepping forward and taking this province to court. As a mother

and grandmother, I am pleased to see leaders from these nations stepping up to protect our children, grandchildren, and those who come after. They see the importance of ensuring our constitutionally protected treaty rights are protected for those that come behind.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking these nations in protecting their citizens from the infringement of treaty rights. miigwech.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Launch of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls+ Community Response Fund

Mr. Lemaigre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today our government is announcing the official launch of our province's first-ever Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls+ Community Response Fund. Our government is proud to provide 400,000 to the applicants from First Nation and Métis communities and organizations in Saskatchewan, as well as other non-profit organizations partnering with Indigenous people. The funding can be used for grassroots projects that address issues raised in the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

The funding will support at least 10 community projects this year, each receiving up to \$40,000. We are proud to have worked collaboratively on the program design with several Indigenous women who understand first-hand how these projects can help enhance violence prevention and build safety in our communities. Marlene Bear and Myrna LaPlante are here with us today, and unfortunately Lori Whiteman and Autumn LaRose-Smith, who were also a part of this important work, could not join us here today.

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan and the people of our province, thank you for your contribution on this important initiative. I ask that all members join me in thanking everyone who participated in helping launch this program. Thank you.

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

Access to Justice Week Engages Communities

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize Saskatchewan's Access to Justice Week which occurred on the week of October 24th to the 28th. This was the seventh annual Access to Justice Week and saw Saskatchewan collaborating with local and national partners to engage with both justice stakeholders and the public at large.

This week is one way to engage different communities in the goal of improving access to justice for all in this province. The week provided opportunities to engage with new and diverse voices and highlighted initiatives that aim to improve access to justice for Saskatchewan residents. The week saw guest speakers share their insight and professionalism as they discussed measures of accountability in justice, innovation in the legal profession, improving family justice systems, improving access and eliminating legal barriers for diverse communities, as well as how to better serve Indigenous clients in the justice system.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to offer a thank you to all the organizations that made this year's Access to Justice Week a success, and thank you to all that give of their time throughout the year to help improve access to justice for all of those people in our community. I ask that all members join me today in recognizing Saskatchewan's Access to Justice Week, and call on the government to live the principles of Access to Justice Week in their work every day, ensuring that there are no barriers to accessing legal services and the justice system in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota.

People Around the World Stand with Women in Iran

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On September 13th, Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman, was arrested in Iran for failing to adequately cover her hair. She was repeatedly beaten, and after video footage surfaced of her collapsing at a police station and later in a coma, Iranians became enraged. The world, Mr. Speaker, has followed suit. And in the days and weeks after Amini's death in Iran, and in capitals around the world, women have removed and often burned their head scarves in protest of her treatment. In recent weeks, protests have also been held in Regina and Saskatoon and have included members of my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to the women who have lost their lives protesting in Iran, and to those who still dare to continue to protest. As one commentator pointed out, it is both inspiring and terrifying when you consider the risks that women in that country face when they speak out, burn their head scarves, demand change.

In Canada and Saskatchewan, there is equality for women under the law. That matters and is not to be taken lightly or eroded. We stand with equality for women here, in Iran, and around the world. Women. Life. Freedom. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

Honouring Our Veterans

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. November 5th to November 11th is Veterans' Week in Canada. In the days leading up to our national Remembrance Day, we honour our current and formerly enlisted members and remember the legacies of the warriors who paid the ultimate price for our freedom.

This year is especially significant for Canadian military history. Eighty years ago, 4,963 Canadians took part in the Dieppe raid. The operation was an attempt by the Allied forces to establish a beachhead in northern France and would serve as the beginning of the liberation of Europe from the Axis Powers. After the raid's failure, 2,210 Canadians, less than half that had set out, returned to Great Britain. Their sacrifice would prove critical to the D-Day landing's success and the Axis's eventual defeat.

On November 11th, I will have the privileged opportunity to honour our veterans and lay the wreath at the cenotaph. Our

shared and collective responsibility to be there for our nation and for each other is what brings us all together as Canadians. Let us remember those who did not make it home, those who did but are still struggling, and those currently serving. I ask all the members to join me in thanking our veterans and enlisted members past, present, and future for their service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

More Saskatchewan People Are Working

Mr. Bonk: — Mr. Speaker, on Friday Statistics Canada released the October labour force report. Here's what it had to say about Saskatchewan. There are more women working. There are more men working. There are more Indigenous people working. There are more non-Indigenous people working. There are more people working in tech jobs, in health care, in the service industry. More people working in forestry, fishing, mining, and oil and gas. More people working in agriculture, in education, and in transportation. There are more people working in the private sector. There are more people working in the public sector.

Mr. Speaker, there are more jobs in almost every category. That's growth that works for everyone. Altogether there were more than 18,600 people working in Saskatchewan in October than there was a year ago. That's 50 new jobs every day for the past year. Economists said that job creation across Canada actually exceeded expectations in October. And it's worth noting that Saskatchewan's rate of job growth is nearly double that of the national rate.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP may think there's nothing to be proud of here, but I think there's a lot to be proud of in Saskatchewan. I want to thank all the employers for the opportunities that they're creating and for all the people who are filling those opportunities. You make Saskatchewan a better place, and you give us all a lot to be proud of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Oversight of Qualified Independent Schools

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, while there's a growing list of embarrassments that this government is responsible for, I certainly didn't have teaching that the Loch Ness monster is a real-life dinosaur on the old bingo card. Now the minister simply needed to say that it was wrong and that he would move to immediately fix it, but he didn't.

Does the Premier think that it's appropriate that kids in publicly funded schools were learning that humans and dinosaurs walked the earth together?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, part of the work that was done back in 2012, 2013, as it related to the change in the categories and the creation of the qualified independent category, was a review that resulted in the ministry not recommending using the A.C.E. [Accelerated Christian Education] workbooks as they did not meet the

provincial curriculum.

The ministry hired a curriculum consultant who worked with schools, independent schools, to ensure that their curriculum did align with provincial curriculum. As a result, SAICS [Saskatchewan Association of Independent Church Schools] created alternative resources that have been reviewed by the ministry and determined to meet the provincial curriculum outcomes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the main resources for these schools are a workbook, their biology 30 course. There can be additional resources that are used, but the textbook that is in question is not the main resource used in this class.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the question was for the Premier. And that resource is still available on the website.

Now the A.C.E. curriculum includes lessons that reinforce women being submissive. From the course materials presented by the students last week: "You make my life so easy with your loving, submissive spirit." Does the Premier think that schools funded with public dollars should be directing women and girls to be submissive, and will he commit to banning A.C.E. and Bob Jones University content in Saskatchewan schools today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, the work that was done in 2013 resulted in the ministry to not recommend that the A.C.E. workbooks be used. There was work done with the curriculum consultant to ensure that the workbooks that were used going forward in the future, that they were in alignment with the curriculum of Saskatchewan.

For example, Mr. Speaker, the things that we discussed last week, there is a workbook . . . Biology 30, the grade 12 biology, there's one workbook that is called *Evolution*. It includes chapters such as "Tracing Evolution and the Fossil Record," "Fossil Cast and the Rate of Evolution," Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the ministry does work to ensure that the curriculum taught at the schools is in alignment with the provincial curriculum.

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

Ms. Beck: — I guess that's a no. And again, the question was to the Premier.

And again, it's too little, too late. Allegations of abuse in qualified independent schools were reported to the ministry in 2016. More reports of abuse reported to the police in 2018. No criminal charges, so I guess that means that this government didn't see the problem.

There was also a phone call to the minister's office in February of this year. No action. An email, again to the minister's office, on June the 20th describing the beating of children in schools. Again, Mr. Speaker, no action.

To the Premier: why did it take so long to act on allegations of violence against children in schools and how is it, how is it that the safety of children simply does not seem to be a priority for that government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when my office was provided information in terms of the allegations, not just a high-level nature of the allegations in which a former student in the email in June referred to what they told the police and that the police in terms of . . . at a high level. Mr. Speaker, on August 8th my office received information in terms of the nature of those allegations without naming any individuals.

It wasn't until August 9th that my office received a copy of a civil suit that detailed the allegations in pretty clear detail, as well as who the allegations were against, Mr. Speaker. This was the first time that the ministry was provided that information and we directed that to the appropriate authorities.

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

Duty-to-Consult Process

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, you'd think that that minister would at least be curious about allegations of abuse in schools. Another failing grade for this government.

This government is also failing Saskatchewan's Indigenous people. Selling off Crown land without adequately consulting the First Nations of this province and the First Peoples of this province. Failing to ensure that northern and remote communities have the same services that the rest of us enjoy. No plan to address health outcomes or the over-representation of Indigenous people in our corrections system. And a failure, a failure to properly consult with Indigenous communities on developments and projects that impact them.

Does the Premier recognize that our duty-to-consult process is broken, and will he commit to a full overhaul of that system today?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I answered on Thursday of last week, the duty-to-consult policy framework has been in place for 12 years, Mr. Speaker. It is time that . . . We as a government felt that we should review that. That's why consultation has been going on, engagement with First Nations community. But not only First Nations community, with industry, with other local governments.

To date, Mr. Speaker, there have been over 100 meetings conducted with over 200 individuals having presentations at those meetings. We've met with the Saskatchewan Mining Association, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Cameco, SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], and a number of First Nations, Mr. Speaker. We've been out to Cowessess, for example, met with a couple of

different tribal councils.

That engagement — and that is being conducted as we speak — over the past four months, we'll be reporting out into the future, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. We're joined today by First Nation leaders who are fed up with this government's disrespectful approach to duty-to-consult.

The Sask Party plowed ahead with their white paper and their legislation without any consultations with First Nation and Métis people. Indigenous people have treaty rights that are impacted by natural resource development and they work in the natural resource sector. And they have been completely excluded from this report that will impact those rights and interests.

Why didn't the government do any consultations in advance of this white paper?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has an honourable record of working together with First Nations partners and on fostering economic opportunity and reconciliation. I think of our treaty land entitlement system which was ahead of its time and has stood the test of time, forestry agreements, our Indigenous investment financing corporation, Mr. Speaker.

Nothing in *The Saskatchewan First Act*, which defends our exclusive constitutional jurisdiction over natural resources, diminishes or detracts in any way from First Nations treaty rights which are enshrined in the Constitution, Mr. Speaker. Our goal is to unlock Saskatchewan's economic potential for the benefit of everyone in the province, including First Nations, Mr. Speaker. That's where we stand.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. Well I certainly hope that this minister was actually paying attention to my member's statement where I've identified the nations that were taking this province to court.

Mr. Speaker, when the government gets the duty-to-consult wrong, it doesn't just impact Indigenous nations. It impacts all of us. It makes it harder for good projects to move forward, and it means that the First Nation and Métis communities can be shut out from the full potential that comes with the projects in their territories.

We all lose out when this government fails to get the duty-to-consult right. Rather than rushed consultations to refresh the outdated policy, why won't the Sask Party get to work and engage in meaningful consultations and get the duty-to-consult right?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We started this engagement process back in July. It's been four months. We kind of had a stop line by the end of October. We've been informed by a few First Nations that they hadn't had the opportunity to get their thoughts on the record, so we've extended it. We've extended it until probably the end of November, so that all First Nations that want to engage have been able to engage, Mr. Speaker.

But I would say that all 70 First Nations have been contacted. All 10 tribal councils have been contacted. A number of industries have been contacted, Mr. Speaker. We think that the engagement process is very valuable to all citizens in the province, Mr. Speaker, and look forward to the results of that engagement.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Mr. Speaker, the broken consultation this government has started will only result in another broken duty-to-consult policy that won't have any teeth. Last week I asked the minister about his plans for this broken policy. He had to apologize for his unparliamentary language, but he never actually answered the question.

So here it is. Policy isn't enforceable; legislation is. Will the minister commit to enshrining the duty-to-consult into law in Saskatchewan?

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

[14:15]

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I did last week was correct the record, Mr. Speaker. There are surveys that can be done. Industry or First Nations can fill out a survey. There are written responses that will be accepted, Mr. Speaker. And there's in-person engagement meetings that are taking place across the province.

As far as enshrining in legislation, the duty-to-consult is enshrined in our Constitution, Mr. Speaker. Article no. 35 enshrines a duty-to-consult which . . . That Constitution covers every province, Mr. Speaker, so the duty-to-consult is already enshrined.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — So I ask, why wasn't it in your white paper? First Nation and Métis people are tired of being made to feel they don't matter, and they're tired of being made to feel their rights don't matter. Those days are over, Mr. Speaker. We're still here and we're not going anywhere. And neither are our treaty rights. It's long past that this government acknowledge that and enshrine the duty-to-consult into law. Again why won't the Sask Party support legislation on the duty-to-consult?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government

Relations.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer, it's enshrined in the Constitution of this country, article 35. So every province has the obligation to consult when any of these projects are moving forward. How that framework is set up, Mr. Speaker, is the engagement that we're doing today.

But I would say that certainly in no way would I ever describe this government as not caring regarding First Nation issues. Mr. Speaker, just in the last year there has been a residential school memorial put up that was led by the Lieutenant Governor. And they make fun of and they'll make fun of the fact that for the first time in Canada there are treaty boundary signs between Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 on Highway 11. They make fun of it, Mr. Speaker. It is education for the general public to know where those treaty boundaries are.

Mr. Speaker, this government is proud of those objectives that we've put forward.

Rollout of Employee Administrative System for Health Care Workers

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

Ms. Mowat: — That is nonsense, Mr. Speaker.

This government has broken our health care system. Too many families can't get a family doctor. People can't deliver babies across rural Saskatchewan, and health care workers are feeling disrespected, burnt-out, and choosing to leave the province entirely.

Now this government's new bug-ridden health care employee administrative system, AIMS [administrative information management system], was paused a week after it went live. Can this government get anything right, Mr. Speaker? How much is this botched AIMS rollout going to cost?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'll address the first part of that. We do have a plan that is working here. Our health human resource plan, Mr. Speaker, has brought 107 new physicians in there. We're recruiting from the Philippines. We're recruiting from across Canada. We have 150 new nurses that are in advanced education, Mr. Speaker.

As far as AIMS, Mr. Speaker, yes, there were some complications with AIMS. This is a program that has been working for the last five or six years, Mr. Speaker. The SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] has directed the AIMS executive leadership team to pause that until we can get the scheduling and the payroll done. We wanted to make sure that our employees within the health care system were paid, they were scheduled properly, all to maintain patient safety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, that plan hasn't even been put into action. The Premier said as much last week. We're competing with jurisdictions across the country for scarce health workers. And in addition to having a reputation of ignoring health workers and the science, this government now can't even guarantee that health workers will get paid. It's quite the sales pitch, Mr. Speaker.

This government knew that this rollout was coming for years. What went wrong, and what is the plan to fix it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly why we paused it because we wanted to make sure the integrity of the payroll and the scheduling was done. Mr. Speaker, I can guarantee that the people that are in the health care system will receive their cheques. We have reverted back to our legacy system, which has been in place for years, so we will continue to make sure that those payments are done to our health care workers, Mr. Speaker.

As you can imagine, combining over 80 systems with union agreements, Mr. Speaker . . . And some of these systems are over 50 years old, Mr. Speaker. We do have to upgrade some of these legacy systems. When AIMS is ready to be . . . that it is in a position where the scheduling and the payroll is in a safe place and SHA is recommending that to me, we will resume it. Until that time we'll pause it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — The minister acts like this was a surprise, but people have known for a very long time that this rollout would be a disaster, Mr. Speaker. Shifts are being filled on Facebook. It is absurd. And the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses has already filed a grievance based on errors in scheduling, leave requests, and hours worked. AIMS was paused a week after it went live, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan people have lost confidence in this government's management of the health system. What happened, and how are they going to fix it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you. Again I'll advise the House that there are over 80 systems. This is combining all of the old health regions' technology, which all had independent systems. When the SHA was formed years ago, this was part of that system integration, to be able to bring all of those into one system, Mr. Speaker.

There were some challenges. We identified that. That's why the SHA paused it immediately to make sure that the payroll system would go, Mr. Speaker, that the scheduling would go, and that our procurement would go on time. That's exactly why we did it. We had contingency plans built into place if there were any challenges. We enacted those contingency plans as soon as there was problems. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

University.

Utility Rates

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's truly remarkable. You've got the Education minister who can't seem to answer an easy question about whether or not the Loch Ness monster exists, and you've got the Health minister who's struggling to pay people because it's simply too hard. Now, Mr. Speaker, really.

We've got a proposal today for utility price fairness, a utility advocate which is tried, tested, and true in every other province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, our rate review panel here in Saskatchewan used to have its merits but this government has undermined the process by gaming the system, hand-picking members, and still refusing their common-sense solutions. Now independence, Mr. Speaker, I thought independence was something that this government loved, unless apparently it disagrees with their political interest.

So, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why won't the Sask Party bring forward an independent utility advocate?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we have a rate review panel which performs a lot of rigorous evaluation and assessment of the rate applications that are put forward by our Crown utilities.

Crown utilities come forward with reasons that they've got for a requested increase, whether they be increases to cost of labour, the cost of energy, and, Mr. Speaker, there's an analysis that's done. They make a recommendation, not a binding recommendation, but it is a recommendation that's public. So the members opposite can see it, cabinet can see it, and so can the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it's something that's important. It's a process that we value, it's a process that we respect, and it's a process that we're going to continue to use.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, things can happen pretty fast, Mr. Speaker, but lest that minister has forgotten, he completely ignored the rate review panel's recommendations when it came to the Auto Fund. And since then we have seen the now-impotent rate review panel rubber-stamp Energy and Power increases, if they've been consulted at all.

Mr. Speaker, we need a real independent utility advocate like every other province than Saskatchewan has. And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, for a government sitting on \$2 billion of windfall revenues, they need to scrap the hikes. Why won't they do it?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite makes

specific reference to the Saskatchewan Auto Fund. Mr. Speaker, it's the responsibility of this government to make sure that that fund stays viable and stays well funded so that it can continue to pay claims as they come forward.

Mr. Speaker, there may be a recommendation from that member opposite that they'd like to give all the money away and feel good about it for a day. Mr. Speaker, this government will be responsible and will make sure that we're able to continue to fund and continue to operate.

Mr. Speaker, that's an opposition party that has no credibility on affordability issues as long as they support the carbon tax of Jagmeet and Justin. Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely the wrong thing to do in this province. We've got lots of challenges to deal with, and having a carbon tax that's unnecessary, impractical, poorly worded, and does not help the citizens one bit, in fact backs us into a terrible corner. Mr. Speaker, those are people that don't have any credibility. All they need to do is pick up the phone, phone their friend Jagmeet.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Gas, groceries, insurance, mortgages — these are all real costs that are up for people in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, under this government, under their control, utility rates are up as well. In a province with stagnant household incomes, flatlined weekly earnings, regular people just can't afford this government reaching their hands into their pockets for another 5, 10, 20 bucks a month, Mr. Speaker.

An independent advocate ensures that Crown corporations will work for the families, farms, and small businesses in this province. So to the minister — he wants to talk about affordability — why, why does his government think that it's okay for people in this province to be paying more, for life to be more expensive for them here today under his leadership than it was a year ago?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, this is an opposition group that has no credibility when it comes to dealing with affordability, no credibility when it comes to dealing with the federal government, no credibility when it comes to dealing with the carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Regina University talks about lower power rates, but she's the one that called for . . . a 10 per cent power rebate as "a handout for business that doesn't seem like good public policy."

On September 13th, the new Leader of the Opposition was quoted as saying that, "in an affordability crisis, we have some of the best rates as a province." We agree. And we're going to continue our track record of keeping Saskatchewan affordable.

If the NDP are truly concerned about energy affordability in Saskatchewan, I would urge them to call their federal leaders, Justin and Jagmeet, and ask them to remove the carbon tax. It's

an easy thing for them to do. It would be an indication from them that they trust and value the citizens of our province, which they clearly don't.

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

Interpersonal Violence Rates and Support for Second-Stage Shelters

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, second-stage shelters like SOFIA House, which serve women and children fleeing violence, continue to receive no operational funding from the government. And contrary to what that minister said last week, this is not a new ask. This is a fight that's been going on for years.

Mr. Speaker, as Colin Thatcher's visit to the legislature reminded us, Saskatchewan has consistently the highest numbers of intimate partner violence in the country, more than twice the national average.

When will the Sask Party commit to operational funding for second-stage shelters?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let's keep in mind that second-stage housing is for the period immediately following prevention and intervention, so in that six-month to two-year period. That's why the programs and the partnerships that are already part of that first stage — and I've referenced a number of them who do such amazing work, and in which we've invested \$25 million this year in that stage — that's why they will play such a significant part in forming partnerships and the right complements, Mr. Speaker, for the second stage.

And that's why the Sask Housing side of this is also important. Let's not forget Sask Housing is currently supporting second-stage shelters in the province.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Regina Elphinstone said in a media scrum, "I think many of the resources that we are pouring into the system could actually just be rerouted. It wouldn't even be a question of putting more dollars on the table."

Mr. Speaker, that's an interesting intervention, and that's exactly why we want to make sure that what we do around second stage actually complements and builds on those early intervention and prevention efforts in the first stage.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Resources.

Investment Incentives for Lithium Extraction

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to inform the House that another critical mineral, lithium, will be added to our oil and gas processing investment incentive, otherwise known as OGPII, and our Saskatchewan petroleum innovation incentive known as SPII. Those two programs, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

Lithium is used in the manufacturing of batteries for electronics such as phones, tablets, and even electric vehicles. Lithium can be drilled from the ground just as oil and gas are, which is what companies like Grounded Lithium and Prairie Lithium are currently doing. Prairie Lithium not only drills directly for it, but also uses their own technology to extract lithium from oil brine in decommissioned oil and gas wells.

Mr. Speaker, in our government's 2030 growth plan we established a goal supporting the transformation of the province's economy through innovation, technology, and growth development of Saskatchewan's technology sector. This includes continuing to develop our lithium sector and lithium extraction technology.

Lithium is already at high demand around the world and, as society progresses, the demand for lithium is projected to increase significantly. With the importance of battery technology in the world today, we feel it's crucial that we continue exploring our lithium potential here at home. This is also something we should be very proud of, and with the addition of this critical mineral to our existing incentive programs, it will strengthen our investment attractiveness for other companies across the world. This will also expand and establish diversity in our mining sectors and will help to continue Saskatchewan's position as one of the best mining jurisdictions on the planet.

Our government will always stand up and fight for our industries, and these changes to the programs and the future investment it will bring to our province is growth that works for everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And my thanks to the minister for the courtesy of providing a copy of his remarks in advance. You know, Mr. Speaker, this is an evolution of an industry undergoing significant, significant innovation, both here at home and for the province. And I believe all members in this House are proud of the innovation that takes place right here at home.

This is re-energizing, re-incentivizing, and re-economizing, in many cases, assets that are pre-existing here in Saskatchewan, complementing existing expertise in the field, in research, amongst operators, SRC [Saskatchewan Research Council], and the subsurface lab here in Saskatchewan. You know, Mr. Speaker, with growth forecasted to grow in this homegrown industry, this innovation and opportunity here will also to continue to flourish.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we truly need an all-of-the-above approach when it comes to innovation and our economy here in Saskatchewan. And as this industry and natural complements to it, like the one announced by the minister today, continue to roll out, we will certainly be paying attention to the uptake, and you know, consulting with the sector, with industry, with rights holders, researchers, and investors.

And yeah, with that I think I will just sit down and conclude my

remarks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 94 — *The Public Pension and Benefits Administration Corporation Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 94, *The Public Pension and Benefits Administration Corporation Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 94 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 95 — *The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Amendment Act, 2022*

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 95, *The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Amendment Act, 2022* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Energy and Resources that Bill No. 95 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 610 — *The Meaningful Duty to Consult Act*

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 610, *The Meaningful Duty to Consult Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Saskatoon Centre that Bill No. 610 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

TABLING OF COMMUNICATION

The Speaker: — I would like to table a letter from the Lieutenant Governor in regards to the Board of Internal Economy committee changes. The letter reads:

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Pursuant to section 67 of *The Legislative Assembly Act, 2007*, I hereby inform the Assembly of the membership of the Board of Internal Economy, effective November 2nd, 2022: Hon. Randy Weekes, Chair, Speaker; Hon. Jeremy Harrison, Executive Council nominee; Hon. Everett Hindley, Executive Council nominee; Terry Dennis, MLA, government caucus nominee; Alana Ross, MLA, government caucus nominee; Matt Love, MLA, opposition caucus nominee; Nicole Sarauer, MLA, opposition caucus nominee.

Yours sincerely,
Russ Mirasty
Lieutenant Governor, province of Saskatchewan.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 88 — *The Saskatchewan First Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Saskatchewan First Act*. As our Premier has stated, a strong Saskatchewan means a strong Canada. Unfortunately, continued encroachment by the federal government into areas of provincial jurisdiction have threatened

Saskatchewan's economic growth and legislative sovereignty.

Members of this Assembly will know that the situation has been exacerbated in recent years by the current federal government's continued interference in the province's jurisdiction over natural resources under the guise of federal environmental regulation. Our Premier has made it very clear that it is time to defend and assert Saskatchewan's economic autonomy by drawing the line, including the introduction of provincial legislation to clarify and protect Saskatchewan's constitutional rights.

This historic legislation will assert Saskatchewan's exclusive jurisdiction under the Constitution of Canada and in particular those matters listed in section 92A of the *Constitution Act, 1867*. It will assert that the doctrine of interjurisdictional immunity applies to exclusive provincial legislative jurisdiction to the same extent that it applies to exclusive federal legislative jurisdiction.

It will assert Saskatchewan's exclusive legislative jurisdiction under the Constitution of Canada in relation to the following matters in Saskatchewan and further assert that these matters fall within the core of exclusive provincial jurisdiction for the purposes of the doctrine of interjurisdictional immunity:

the exploration for non-renewable natural resources . . .

the development, conservation and management of non-renewable natural resources in Saskatchewan . . .

the development, conservation and management of forestry resources in Saskatchewan . . .

the operation of sites and facilities in Saskatchewan for the generation and production of electrical energy . . .

the regulation of all industries and businesses falling within the exclusive jurisdiction of Saskatchewan . . .

the regulation of fertilizer use in Saskatchewan, including application, production, quantities and emissions.

And other such matters identified in the regulations, Mr. Speaker.

These are assertions of existing rights that are being undermined, not claims for new or radical powers. They are already included in this province's constitutional powers but are not being adequately recognized or respected by the federal government.

Accordingly this bill will also include amendments to Saskatchewan's constitution to clearly confirm Saskatchewan's sovereign autonomy as follows that:

Saskatchewan has autonomy with respect to all the matters falling under its exclusive legislative jurisdiction pursuant to the *Constitution Act, 1867*.

Saskatchewan is and always has been dependent on agriculture, and on the development of its non-renewable natural resources, forestry resources and electrical energy generation and production.

Saskatchewan's ability to control the development of its non-renewable natural resources, its forestry resources, and

its electrical energy generation and production is critical to the future well-being and prosperity of Saskatchewan and its people.

Mr. Speaker, this confirmation of Saskatchewan's constitutional sovereign autonomy will foster our strength and that of Canada as a whole.

We must also be very clear that the amendments proposed by Saskatchewan and also made by the province of Quebec do not purport to amend the Constitution of Canada. They are amendments to the provincial constitutions, which are expressly authorized by section 45 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. The *Constitution Act, 1867* is not just the Constitution of Canada. It also contains part V entitled Provincial Constitutions. Both Quebec's amendment and our proposed amendment are to that part of the Act only.

Mr. Speaker, some have also questioned whether in fact Quebec unilaterally amended the federal constitution and have relied on the fact that the federal government's website, which sets out federal laws and includes a section on the Constitution, does not show the recent Quebec amendments, sections 90Q.1 and 90Q.2. However the federal website, Mr. Speaker, does not determine the law. It is merely a website.

Quebec passed *An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec*, SQ 2022, c 14, setting out these amendments in section 166. The federal government has not challenged the constitutionality of the section of the Act. The fact that it has not changed the version of the *Constitution Act, 1867* on its website is not legally relevant.

Mr. Speaker, finally under this Act where there is an apparent incursion into exclusive provincial jurisdiction by a federal initiative, this bill will provide that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may refer that matter to a new independent economic assessment tribunal. This tribunal will be tasked with identifying and assessing the economic harm caused by federal initiatives in Saskatchewan. This may include an assessment of the economic impact of federal policies, Acts, or legislations, regulations that extend into Saskatchewan's constitutional powers.

Mr. Speaker, rather than relying on vague assertions, data, and figures provided by the federal government, the tribunal's report and recommendations will provide the Government of Saskatchewan with the actual economic impact on Saskatchewan of federal initiatives. This will empirically inform the government regarding appropriate next steps, including serving as an evidentiary basis for any formal legal steps that may need to be taken to protect Saskatchewan's interests.

In a ruling earlier this year, striking down one of those federal policies, the *Impact Assessment Act*, Alberta Chief Justice Catherine Fraser wrote:

Through this legislative scheme, parliament has taken a wrecking ball to the constitutional rights of the citizens of Alberta and Saskatchewan and other provinces to have their natural resources developed for their benefit.

[14:45]

Saskatchewan will not stand by while the federal government implements initiatives that could dramatically affect Saskatchewan's sovereignty and economic well-being or continue to undercut our exclusive constitutional right to develop our natural resources and grow our economy.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is an important part of defending and asserting Saskatchewan's economic autonomy and protecting Saskatchewan jobs and our economic future. It is an important part of drawing the line. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the core issues that it addresses, including addressing root causes of affordability, protectors of affordability, are of the utmost importance to the people of Saskatchewan. The sooner this legislation is passed, the sooner we can get to work, establish the tribunal, and amend our constitution.

Mr. Speaker, today the opposition has the chance to grant leave to pass this bill through all remaining stages. It has the chance right now, today. And I urge them, I invite them to join us and together pass this legislation to put Saskatchewan first.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of *The Saskatchewan First Act*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 88 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 88, *The Saskatchewan First Act*. This is a piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, that asserts Saskatchewan's jurisdiction over natural resources. The other document of course that asserts provincial jurisdiction over natural resources is the Constitution, section 92 of the Constitution, which states, and I quote, "... the [provincial] legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to exploration for non-renewable natural resources in the province."

So, Mr. Speaker, this is a bill that asserts nothing. It reasserts existing rights and jurisdictional principles, Mr. Speaker. The bill before us also declares that unconstitutional federal initiatives are of no application. Well that would be accurate, Mr. Speaker, because of course they're unconstitutional.

So we are concerned on this side that a lot of time is being spent on a piece of legislation that does nothing new, Mr. Speaker, and we're not the only ones. There hasn't been a lot of positive feedback for this particular piece of legislation so far, Mr. Speaker, except of course from Danielle Smith, the Premier of Alberta, the leader of the UCP [United Conservative Party], the beleaguered Premier of Alberta of course, who's sliding in the polls as we speak for her blaming Ukraine for the Russian invasion and stating that, you know, the unvaccinated are the most discriminated people of all that she's seen in her lifetime.

But I digress, Mr. Speaker. It's clearly the UCP that this Sask Party government is taking its cues from, unfortunately. But above all else, all that aside, above all else, Mr. Speaker, what we're concerned about with this piece of legislation is that in addition to the fact that it contains nothing new, it contains nothing to help the people of Saskatchewan. Rather it deflects from the fact that this is not growth that is working for everyone, Mr. Speaker.

This is a government that is struggling to feed, house, and properly employ its own people, Mr. Speaker. This is a government with a health care system in collapse. This is a government that has seen a 1 per cent increase in full-time employment in 10 years, Mr. Speaker, some of the worst rates of out-migration, mortgage default, some of the lowest minimum wages in the country, child poverty, Mr. Speaker.

And these days when you point to these failures, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite can be heard from the comfort of folks' living rooms saying, blah, blah, blah — sort of what the Premier had to say: I don't care. It's a common theme, Mr. Speaker.

The one new substantive thing that this bill does, beyond eating up valuable resources for Saskatchewan people, is it creates a tribunal, Mr. Speaker, kind of a sister to the white paper, it appears. It certainly signals to the people of this province that there's more where that came from, and you know, this was a much-maligned, much-ridiculed white paper, Mr. Speaker.

And the members opposite are always complaining that we're quoting from the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] or some other source that's more friendly to us, so let's look at what Harper's former deputy chief of staff had to say. He described it as:

... a new low in political communications in Canada. It is doubtful that any government in the history of Confederation — federal, provincial, or municipal — has published something so badly written.

He goes on:

The text is not so much spoiled by errors as composed of them and the run-on sentences meander more than the South Saskatchewan River.

He called it "... the literary equivalent of a baby's high chair after a spaghetti dinner." So it's not just the form that's been condemned, Mr. Speaker. It's the substance too. The math doesn't line up by a factor of billions. So again this is a government that appears to be throwing money at distracting messaging rather than actually pushing to accomplishing anything of note for the people of Saskatchewan.

We are certainly concerned that this Act signals the government's intention to do more of that, to distract from its failures. And at what cost, Mr. Speaker, as folks continue to buckle under a crushing cost-of-living crisis?

Speaking of a lack of consultation, there's no mention of Indigenous people. I can hear the Minister of Justice commenting as I give my remarks. I don't know if she's weighing in to provide an example of a First Nations person that was consulted during the drafting of this legislation. It's certainly very quiet now on that side, Mr. Speaker. This is part of a concerning pattern of conduct from that government, this lack of consultation.

But I did hear the Minister of Justice comment on the cost of inaction. The other pattern of conduct we're seeing from this government ... Although they say that they take an above-all approach to resource development, Mr. Speaker, we simply aren't seeing that. Their continued inaction and disinterest in

investing in the critical need for renewable energy is concerning.

There are challenges in investing in infrastructure in wind, in solar, in geothermal, in hydro. These are huge challenges. There's no question, Mr. Speaker, and no one denies this. But this Sask Party government is absent on that fight, on that front. They are not fighting for a commitment that those developments serve Saskatchewan workers, ensure us maximal economic opportunities, and recognize the fact that not acting to meet the challenges will actually be more costly down the road.

We need a strong, intelligent, effective representative at the table with Ottawa, Mr. Speaker. There is no question. But instead of proposing a meaningful plan that takes into account Saskatchewan's unique needs as we face undeniable truths about our collective fate, this is a government that is sticking its head in the sand, picking fights by introducing symbolic bills, and publishing angsty word-salad essays. These do not a plan make, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, we will certainly be working very hard to consult with stakeholders on this bill, and I urge folks out there who are listening to reach out to our lead critic, the member from Douglas Park. We will be working hard in the days and weeks ahead as this bill winds its way through adjourned debates and to committee. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate on Bill 88, *The Saskatchewan First Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 89 — *The Income Tax (Affordability) Amendment Act, 2022*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I stand today to move second reading of Bill No. 89, *The Income Tax (Affordability) Amendment Act, 2022*. This legislation implements the income tax initiatives that were announced on August 23rd, 2022 as part of the '22-23 first quarter financial report.

Mr. Speaker, to help people facing challenges due to inflation, a one-time Saskatchewan affordability tax credit payment of \$500 will be issued to all adult residents 18 years of age and older as of December 31st, 2022 who have filed a 2021 income tax return. The total cost to government of this initiative is estimated at 450 million, with almost 900,000 cheques will be mailed starting the week of November 14th. The amendments incorporate the Saskatchewan affordability tax credit into the income tax legislation.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the small-business tax rate reduction will be extended for another year to provide further support to small businesses as they continue to recover from the pandemic while facing new challenges such as inflationary pressures, interest rate hikes, supply chain issues, and labour shortages. The extension of the small-business tax rate reduction will maintain the small-business rate at zero per cent retroactive to July 1st,

2022 and delay the restoration of the rate to 2 per cent for another year. The net fiscal impact to the province of this change would be a reduction of income tax revenue of 51.2 million over a three-year period, 2022-23 to 2024-25. About 31,000 incorporated Saskatchewan small businesses will benefit from this initiative.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we'll be making a corresponding change to the dividend tax credit rate in response to changes to the small-business rate. This change will maintain integration between the corporate and personal income tax systems.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of Bill No. 89, *The Income Tax (Affordability) Amendment Act, 2022*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 89 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 89, *The Income Tax (Affordability) Amendment Act, 2022*. Of course this is the piece of legislation that permits the issuing of the \$500 cheques to individuals who have filed income tax in Saskatchewan. This is not an affordability relief measure that is targeted in any way to children, nor does it recognize the significant barriers of many folks who weren't able to file taxes.

For eight months the Saskatchewan New Democrats called for affordability relief, Mr. Speaker. And for eight whole months we pointed out how ludicrous and unacceptable it was that the Sask Party government was raking in windfall provincial profits, windfall revenues, Mr. Speaker, and that none of that wealth was going to Saskatchewan people. And then one week before they called an election they issued these cheques. They made an announcement that they would be issued, these cheques. I should clarify, these cheques have not yet been issued and it remains to be seen how that process, extremely costly process, plays out, Mr. Speaker.

But as the generational cost-of-living crisis loomed and as the price of essentials absolutely skyrocketed in this province, Mr. Speaker, this government sat idly by for eight whole months, despite taking in windfall provincial revenues. The Saskatchewan Party knows they have nothing, absolutely nothing, to be proud of when it comes to the social determinants in Saskatchewan. But the economic indicators are no better, Mr. Speaker. One per cent full-time growth in 10 years. Wow, I know I keep saying that number but it really is shocking and it should have us all concerned. We have some of the lowest minimum wages in the country, record mortgage defaults, surging food bank use amongst working people, and out-migration is way up.

[15:00]

But what is most concerning perhaps to me about this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is that our child poverty numbers will not be impacted one bit by this affordability measure — not one bit — as the over 1 in 4 Saskatchewan children living in poverty were deemed ineligible to benefit from this piece of affordability relief.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, I have some friends that live down the road from me. They're a bunch of DINKs, double income, no

kids. Yeah, phew. They live down the street from me in a nice big house. And this affordability crisis, it's impacted them a bit. I think they've sort of curtailed their online shopping. They're going on two vacations instead of three this year, and they don't eat out quite as much.

So these friends of mine, Mr. Speaker, they'll be eligible for twice as much out of this affordability measure as the single mom down the street from my constituency office with three kids who's struggling to keep the lights on and the house heated. What a shame. What a missed opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

We'll have more to say about this piece of legislation I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, and with that, it's a pleasure to adjourn debate on Bill No. 89, *The Income Tax (Affordability) Amendment Act, 2022*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 90 — *The Telecommunications Statutes (Borrowing Powers) Amendment Act, 2022*

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be rising today to move second reading of Bill 90, *The Telecommunications Statutes (Borrowing Powers) Amendment Act, 2022*. Mr. Speaker, this bill serves to amend subsection 32(1) of *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act* and subsection 17(1) of *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Act* with changes that will result in an increase to SaskTel and SaskTel Holdco's maximum aggregate borrowing limit.

SaskTel requires an increase in its \$1.8 billion total borrowing limit to \$2.9 billion to ensure it has the resources and flexibility to continue to aggressively invest in infrastructure, including rural fibre, rural wireless, and the ongoing 5G rollout — and all for the benefit of Saskatchewan residents.

As SaskTel continues to grow as an enterprise, its long- and short-term debt will also continue to grow. The current five-year forecast shows the corporation reaching its aggregate borrowing limit of \$1.8 billion in 2024-25. To ensure that unforeseen developments do not result in more debt than currently planned, it is prudent to increase the aggregate borrowing limit.

The higher limit only permits borrowing. All borrowings and the underlying requirements are subject to oversight by Finance, CIC, and by cabinet. The request to increase the borrowing limit assumes the status quo for SaskTel. It is prudent to plan on continuation of the status quo, which will see continued wireless network expansion and rural broadband expansion.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to now move second reading of *The Telecommunications Statutes (Borrowing Powers) Amendment Act, 2022*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 90 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 90, *The Telecommunications Statutes (Borrowing Powers) Amendment Act, 2022*. This is a short bill, Mr. Speaker, and essentially it simply increases the borrowing limit for SaskTel from 1.8 billion to 2.9. That is a significant increase, Mr. Speaker, but on this side we're committed to giving this Crown what it needs to continue to do the good work in the community and improve the essential service it offers to the people of Saskatchewan.

SaskTel is such a key part of this province's story, Mr. Speaker. We have unfortunately seen its potential curtailed at some junctures as a result of that Sask Party government, and we remain on high alert given the concerning pattern of this government of selling off profitable Crowns. But we remain committed to SaskTel as a world leader, a leader in the industry, as it has been for so long, Mr. Speaker. We have been a strong defender of keeping SaskTel a strong and profitable Crown.

Of course the critic for SaskTel, the member for Rosemont, will be taking the lead on consultation on this bill. He has been a strong defender of SaskTel and its good work. He's been pushing to forgo the dividend to make rural connectivity actually happen in this province to connect the whole province.

Because that's what Crown corporations are about, Mr. Speaker: a recognition that our natural endowments and our collective treasures, and that when we manage and provide services in the public good rather than solely for the profit of a few, we all benefit, Mr. Speaker.

On this side we look forward to chatting with stakeholders. We'll have more to say on this bill as we see it wind its way through the second reading process and into committee. With that, it's a pleasure to adjourn debate on Bill No. 90.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 91 — *The Saskatchewan Employment (Part III) Amendment Act, 2022*

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be moving second reading of Bill 91, *The Saskatchewan Employment (Part III) Amendment Act, 2022*. This bill makes several amendments to the occupational health and safety provisions of the Act to help improve health and safety and better meet the needs of modern workplaces.

Firstly, it would change the definition of "worker." The first amendment clarifies the definition of "worker" to include secondary and post-secondary students. This amendment will

clarify that those students who are permitted to work or who are being trained by an employer are covered by the provisions of part III of the Act.

Next item in the bill is harassment investigations. In January our government brought into place legislation that better protects workers from harassment, including sexual harassment, and expanded the protection to students, volunteers, and to contract workers. After further review of the feedback from stakeholders, we want to amend the harassment legislation to explicitly state the employer's duty to ensure that incidents of harassments are investigated.

Harassment has no place in our workplaces. It is not enough for employers to have a policy. They must enforce that policy, which includes appropriately investigating all reports of harassment. This amendment will make it clear that this is the responsibility of everyone in the workplace.

The next item is strengthening violence provisions. Our third amendment is to require all workplaces have a violence policy in place. Currently only prescribed workplaces are required to have a violence policy and prevention plan. In addition these provisions will apply to students, volunteers, and to contract workers. According to the Workers' Compensation Board, workplace injuries caused by violence are one of the top four causes contributing to increases in serious injuries in Saskatchewan. Since 2013 injuries due to violence have increased by 22 per cent, from 924 in 2013 to 1,129 in 2020. Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable.

Everyone who comes to work should feel safe and be safe. Having a violence policy for all workplaces will help in reducing injuries and create safer, healthier spaces. Like the harassment provisions, the amendments will require workplaces to have a policy and investigate all incidents of violence.

Next item deals with photographs and recordings during inspections and nominees at an investigation review. The last two amendments clarify the work and authority of occupational health officers when doing an inspection or doing an investigation review.

Firstly, we will look to clarify that officers can take photographs or other recordings while doing an inspection. Officers often do this now, but we want to ensure that we are building an environment of fairness, and by making this amendment we are being open and transparent about the activity. Privacy will strictly be maintained in all circumstances. This amendment will bring Saskatchewan in line with other jurisdictions in Canada.

Secondly, we will authorize an officer to exclude a person from an investigation interview if there is a perceived conflict. Currently, when officers are conducting an interview, the person being questioned can nominate another individual to be present. This is an important right that we are not amending. However we want to ensure that the interview and investigation process are not influenced by third parties and that workers are not led to believe that they are represented by a nominee who does not necessarily have the workers' best interests in mind. With the change, if an officer believes that this will occur, they can require the person to select a different nominee. It is essential when there is a workplace-related fatality, serious injury, or harassment that

the officers have all the facts and information to understand what has happened and if there is any violations of the legislation.

The last portion of the bill deals with housekeeping and general amendments. As with any review of legislation, we listen to the stakeholders, we examine how we are applying the actual provisions, and we try and create a balance that addresses issues or concerns for our employers and workers. The review of part III of the Act was no different. We will amend provisions to ensure that there is alignment with the changes made to the Canadian *Hazardous Materials Information Review Act*. We will also discontinue the practice of reducing the amount of money owed to workers by the amount of money earned in an alternate employment. This will ensure that workers who have suffered discriminatory action will receive the full amount of wages that the worker would have earned.

Conclusion, Mr. Speaker, as our province continues to experience fiscal and economic growth, the legislation that governs our employers and workers needs to meet the changing environments that they work within. It needs to be fair and balanced, and it needs to promote investment. And most importantly it needs to protect the health and safety of workers. All of the proposed amendments today are focused on just that. Our government believes in Mission: Zero — zero injuries, zero fatalities, and zero suffering. Today's amendments are a step in the right direction towards achieving this goal and to building a strong province that is the best place to live, work, and invest.

Mr. Speaker, my privilege to move second reading of Bill 91, *The Saskatchewan Employment (Part III) Amendment Act, 2022*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 91 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill 91, *The Saskatchewan Employment Amendment Act*. As the minister has canvassed, this is a bill that extends the application of the Act to volunteers, independent and dependent contractors, students, individuals acting on behalf of employers, individuals under supervisors' control. So it really expands the definition of a "worker" under the legislation, Mr. Speaker. And it clarifies that employers are responsible to ensure that all workers are not exposed to violence and harassment in the workplace. It introduces a . . . extends a bar against violence in the workplace, and it requires that workplaces develop and implement policies and prevention plans on violence and harassment and investigate all incidents of violence and harassment in the workplace.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am hearing the minister's comments for the first time today of course, but of course this side welcomes this legislation. This is something that our Labour and Justice critics have been working on for some time. We've been pushing for this expansion of workplace protections, of health and safety protections, Mr. Speaker, and we do look forward to consulting. Our only question would be whether the Act is comprehensive enough, whether it goes far enough. But we certainly welcome this initiative, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, I look forward to seeing what my colleagues, the lead critic on this bill, have to say. And I'm sure that they will

reach out to folks to do extensive consultation, and I look forward to further debate on this bill. So with that, I move to adjourn Bill No. 91, *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Employment Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

[15:15]

Bill No. 92 — *The Automobile Accident Insurance (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2022*

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be rising today to move the second reading of *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2022*. Mr. Speaker, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Act* is the Act that governs property damage insurance coverage, injury coverage, and liability insurance. In addition to some housekeeping changes, there are some areas I would like to outline today, Mr. Speaker.

The first point of discussion is insurance coverage for highly automated vehicles. SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] plans to exclude these vehicles from the Auto Fund insurance coverage during research, pilot, or testing phases. The proposed changes gives SGI authority to specify the insurance requirements for highly automated vehicles. These vehicles will need to be insured by a third party for damage and liability coverage, Mr. Speaker. In addition, SGI, Saskatchewan Health, and WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] can recover insurance money that is paid out because of injuries or property damage caused by an at-fault highly automated vehicle.

By doing so, Mr. Speaker, this would ensure the risk of these vehicles and what they are capable of are better understood before they are integrated into SGI's insurance program. Instead, these highly automated vehicles can be tested after obtaining a permit under *The Traffic Safety Act*. That will be achieved by introducing a new set of regulations that will specifically pertain to automated vehicles.

Highly automated vehicles are a thing of the future, and SGI's working to develop a plan to one day safely integrate them into everyday traffic. Eventually, Mr. Speaker, SGI will move away from the permit-based environment and regulate these vehicles through legislation, regulations, and policy.

Next, Mr. Speaker, a change is being proposed to clarify that the aggregate benefit available for the counselling of immediate family members of an insured applies on a per-claim basis. For example, if three people are injured in a single crash and three separate claims are filed, each insured family members are eligible for the total aggregate amount. The total counselling benefit for family members of an insured is \$5,428.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, a change is being proposed to see that those in remand are eligible for an income replacement benefit.

The courts have interpreted it that being on remand, which essentially means someone who is detained pending on the resolution of a criminal charge, does not equal a prison sentence. Therefore a change is required to clarify the wording in *The Automobile Accident Insurance Act* so that a person on remand receives an income replacement benefit.

Mr. Speaker, these are the most notable changes. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Automobile Accident Insurance Act*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 92 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 92, *The Automobile Accident Insurance (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2022*. I know that our lead critic in this area, the new member for Meewasin, is looking forward to digging in on this and reaching out to stakeholders.

I understand this is a bill that modernizes, to some extent, the legislation, and there are some housekeeping items I did notice, and of course there is this new issue of highly automated vehicles and the decision that SGI will not be insuring them. And I know that the member from Meewasin will be engaging in consultation around that.

The minister mentioned changes to the counselling benefit as another of the substantive changes under this Act, Mr. Speaker. And of course there is the clarification that folks held in detention on remand are not serving a sentence. And this is a welcome clarification given that we have such crushingly high numbers of folks in remand, Mr. Speaker, who are being held prior to being found guilty of any crime.

With that, I will adjourn debate on this bill, and I look forward to seeing it wind its way through the process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 93 — *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2022*

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to be moving the second reading of *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2022*. *The Traffic Safety Act* is the legislation that outlines the Saskatchewan drivers' licensing and motor vehicle operation rules. It ensures the roads in our province and the people travelling on them are safe.

Mr. Speaker, the majority of the amendments to the Act will provide clarity to the existing legislation. To begin, Mr. Speaker, I first bring you a change that provides SGI the authority to

reverse a driver's demerit points under the driver improvement program when that driver is successful on appeal to the Highway Traffic Board with respect to their safety rating under the safe driver recognition program. If a driver successfully appeals their safe driver recognition points, they now also have the demerit points related to the same collision removed in the driver improvement program.

We listened to SGI customers who were frustrated with the inconsistency in the appeal process between the two programs. We heard what they had to say, and the results are working to make the experience better for them.

While policy has allowed us to start moving towards this change, this amendment to *The Traffic Safety Act* will solidify the move. We are confident this change is making the process clearer for SGI's customers and is ensuring that their overall experience with SGI is satisfactory.

Mr. Speaker, a change is proposed that provides SGI with the authority to allow drivers the option to use approved electronic documentation instead of a physical copy if they so choose. This will include vehicle inspection certificates, vehicle registration insurance certificates, driver's licences, and so on. This change ensures Saskatchewan keeps up with technological advancements as we move to a more digital world, Mr. Speaker.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, a change is proposed to ensure there are no gaps between a court-ordered driving prohibition and SGI's legislation, which in rare cases could grant a person limited driving privileges. It will also change the language to ensure that a lawsuit for bereavement damages after a fatal collision is subject to a two-year limitation period following the date of the conviction that triggers the right to sue.

Mr. Speaker, these are the most notable changes, and a few housekeeping amendments to align regulations and legislation.

With that, I move second reading of *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2022*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 93 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 93, *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2022*. The Act essentially works to allow SGI to clarify many things. When court-ordered driving prohibitions expire for the purposes of reinstating driving privileges, it clarifies the limitation period of two years for action for non-economic loss. Sorry. It clarifies that it also applies to bereavement damages — that limitation period, Mr. Speaker. It also clarifies the administrator's authority respecting demerit points and the driver improvement program.

It concerns itself with demerit points for traffic infractions committed outside the jurisdiction and provides for adjusted points when customers successfully appeal their points to the Highway Traffic Board. It also allows drivers to produce proof of documentation related to their driver's licence and insurance and registration through now an electronic format.

So, Mr. Speaker, all to say this appears to be really a series of modernizing changes, although don't hold me to it. I know that our critic, the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, will engage in consultation around this bill. And with that, it is a pleasure to adjourn debate on Bill No. 93.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:25.]

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