



THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

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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

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Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP)	Skoropad, Hon. Dana — Arm River (SP)
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Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)	Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
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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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Principal Clerk — Kathy Burianyak

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I would request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to colleagues for leave. Mr. Speaker, it brings me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you, to this Assembly, a very special guest here today. Joining us is Andrian Makhnachov. He's a newcomer to Saskatchewan from Ukraine who has become the province's, and I would say quite likely the world's, latest social media sensation. He's a young man who, in the words of one media personality said, "has gone completely bonkers and gone viral," Mr. Speaker, on TikTok. He shows videos about his new life in Canada. And accompanying Andrian today is his brother Alex.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of meeting both of these fine young gentlemen prior to question period, alongside the Minister of Trade and Export and our member from Canora-Pelly that serves as the Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations representative. Mr. Speaker, Andrian is just 19 years old. He grew up in a village in western Ukraine of Lviv. With great reluctance he decided to leave his homeland to escape the war, very much like thousands of other Ukrainians. In May he moved to the city of Regina in Saskatchewan. He was able to join his brother who had come to Canada about nine months ago.

Mr. Speaker, Andrian thought it would be a good idea to tell the story of his adjustment to life in Canada via TikTok. He started to post a number of funny videos about things that he was noticing in Canada and in Saskatchewan and the things that he found interesting or quirky or sometimes just plain odd. One video, for example, was about a combo washer-dryer in his apartment, something we often take for granted but he found unusual because he was not accustomed to using a dryer, Mr. Speaker.

He posted about drinking his first double-double at Timmies, Mr. Speaker. He's posted about what his thoughts are when it comes to cooking mac and cheese. Mr. Speaker, he's also apparently quite shocked by the perogy selection that we have at our supermarkets and very impressed with the number of dips that he could buy to accompany the potato chips that he had purchased.

So perogies, mac and cheese, chips and dip, Mr. Speaker, these are very important issues for teenagers, and Andrian has

addressed these issues head-on with his social media presence. Mr. Speaker, Andrian also posted on the generosity of his neighbours in Regina, one of whom brought him some homemade banana pancakes and then quickly informed him that if he wanted to become a real Canadian that he should eat those pancakes each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, the reaction to Andrian's TikTok videos has been nothing short of astonishing. A video showing how he could wash a \$20 bill under the water because it was plastic in Canada, it received millions of views on that app, Mr. Speaker. He did another video of eating a Nanaimo bar for the first time, of which he reports that they are quite tasty but they're quite possibly a little too sweet, so he only provided the Nanaimo bar with a score of 8 out of 10.

Mr. Speaker, more seriously, Russia's brutal attack on Ukraine has been devastating all of the people that live in that country, and I think the entire world has been inspired by the determination and the resilience of the Ukrainian people. The TikTok videos that Andrian Makhnachov are just another demonstration of that very resilience.

Mr. Speaker, this is a young man that has come to another country with a different culture and a different language, and he is making the very best of his situation. More than that, he has turned himself into a star in a mere matter of months, and in doing so he has brought Canadians, I would say Saskatchewan residents and Ukrainians, much closer together. There is no question that Andrian is a young man with a very bright future, and we're glad that he calls Regina and Saskatchewan home. And I would ask all members to join me in welcoming both Alex and Andrian to this Legislative Assembly.

And while I'm on my feet, very quickly, Mr. Speaker, sitting on the outside edges of Andrian and Alex are MacGregor and Finnley Harrison, Mr. Speaker. MacGregor and Finnley Harrison have a very important job, as they take care of the gentleman that sits behind me when he's not at work in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Also I would ask all members to join me in welcoming Mac and Finn to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the opposition I'd like to join with the Premier in welcoming Andrian and your family to this legislature. I'm a long-time TikTok lurker and big fan certainly of the posts that you make and also of your deep and unabiding appreciation for potato chips, which I know many on this side of the aisle, and I believe both sides of the aisle, share.

You know, certainly it's a tragedy and I know I speak for all members when I say how sorry we are that you've had to leave your home, but how grateful we are that you've chosen to make your home here in Regina and also here in Saskatchewan, and just so full of admiration for the enthusiasm and positivity for which you've been able to embrace what must be a strange transition to a bit of a different life here. And yeah, just really appreciative of all the work that you've done, certainly for yourself and for the community, and also for the province as a whole.

And I would be remiss if I didn't note that plastic money is very perplexing to many of us in Canada still to this date. So you know, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming Andrian and his family to this legislature.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to welcome two very special constituents of mine to their legislature. Seated in your gallery are Emily and Fynn, residents of Whitmore Park, who I believe are here for their very first visit, to this, their legislature. Emily is the president of a local marketing company, Encompass Online Marketing, and Fynn loves animals, people, science experiments, and rock climbing, which is a passion we both share, although I suspect he is faster and much more adept than I am, Mr. Speaker. Fynn lives with his brother, two cats, a dog, and a stepdad. And Emily and Fynn enjoy a beautiful recreational property up in the Cumberland area, which I've seen online and I'm deeply envious of, and that maybe I will visit one day. Emily is the younger and wiser sister to our chief of staff, Katherine Norton. And as I said, this is their first time in the legislature, so I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming Emily and Fynn to this, their legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honour to rise in the House and introduce Yahia Benbouazza who is sitting in your gallery. Mr. Speaker, Yahia is one of our Scholarship of Honour recipients that we're announcing this morning.

Mr. Speaker, Yahia served several years as a full-time member of our Armed Forces and remains in our army reserves as he works toward his B.A. [Bachelor of Arts] in Philosophy. Mr. Speaker, we'll hear more about the Scholarship of Honour in the upcoming member's statement, but I would ask all members to help me thank Yahia for his bravery, his dedicated service to our country, and as well welcoming him and his guests to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to echo the comments by the minister and welcome you, Yahia to your legislature and congratulate you on behalf of our opposition on your accomplishments and successes. Thank you for being here. It's a pleasure to have you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask leave for an

extended introduction.

The Speaker: — A request has been asked for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery I would like to introduce first, Krista Heisler. And I missed the opportunity last year when a number of my colleagues introduced the amazing additions in the form of amazing people that had come to us in this building from WestJet. And I don't know what's in the water there at WestJet, but it's its loss, our gain, Mr. Speaker. Krista personifies, as I've said, organizational über-guru-ness. She defines flow. She also spreads so much sunshine and fun and laughter, which certainly we need here.

She was in ER [emergency room] with me, Mr. Speaker. And when she said that she would like to work with me in Justice — there are witnesses — I got up and hugged her on the spot. An amazing ambassador for the minister's office, Mr. Speaker.

Joining with her, and while I'm on my feet, I would like to introduce Mariia Mykolaichuk, also an administrative assistant in our office. Mariia arrived here, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, sponsored by Saskatchewan, with her parents and younger brother on August 10 from Ukraine. She says they chose Saskatchewan as their destination because of the support we've offered to Ukraine. It's our honour to have you, Mariia.

Mariia is from Kyiv, and she says about what's happening in her homeland:

Shock. I can't believe it. It's hard. Crazy for me what's happening. You live your life and one day you wake up at 4 a.m. and get a call from a friend saying Russians are bombing Kyiv. We're used to our routine, having stability in life. I can't believe it can just be ruined.

Doesn't that put so much in perspective, Mr. Speaker, some of our petty cares in this place? We are safe tonight. Our children are safe tonight. Mariia thinks the Ukrainian troops will expel the Russians by the end of the year, but that the war itself will drag on till 2035. That is quite a prediction. We will see.

I was certainly proud to give Mariia the Ukrainian flag that was on my desk last session. It's now on hers in our office, and I would ask everyone to drop by and say hello to Mariia. Welcome to you and your family here in Saskatchewan. I would ask all members to join me in welcoming Mariia and Krista to this, their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be remiss if I didn't take my feet for a moment to acknowledge and welcome Emily Norton and her son Fynn. I've known Emily her entire life. As was mentioned, she's the younger, the little sister of Kat Norton, chief of staff.

Kat and I were the same age going to school, so Emily was one of three younger sisters. We all took the bus together, so the fact that she was the oldest of the youngest sisters made her something of a target over the years. But it has been such a pleasure to watch her grow from a spirited young girl into such an engaged and intelligent young woman. And although I had nothing to do with it, I can't help but take some pride in that.

I would also like to acknowledge Emily's work in the community in food and security. She's been very engaged on that issue and many others. So I did want to join in welcoming her and Fynn to this, their Legislative 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.

[10:15]

The folks who signed this petition wish to bring to your attention the following: Crown lands have been used throughout history by Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities for ceremony, agriculture, fishing, hunting, trapping, and recreation; and this government has been auctioning off these Crown land leases; and the current process of mailing out notices and hand-picking recipients when Crown lands are posted for sale is deeply flawed. The lack of meaningful duty-to-consult leaves the taxpayers of Saskatchewan footing the bill for this government's mistakes and losses in courts.

I'll read the prayer:

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

The folks who signed this petition reside in Saskatoon, St. Louis, and Hagen. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to present a petition this morning for good folks from Moose Jaw and Regina. 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 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.

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 authority.

The below undersigned are residents of Moose Jaw and Regina. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again to present a petition calling on the government to fix the rural health care staffing crisis. These citizens wish to bring to our attention that recruitment and retention of health care professionals is a particular issue in Saskatchewan's rural health care facilities, leading to many emergency room, acute, lab, and X-ray service disruptions; that the ongoing pandemic has created burnout and led to early retirements and resignations which has rippling effects for small cities and towns.

We know that health care workers and their families are valuable assets in Saskatchewan communities and local economies, and that at last year's SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention over 94 per cent of rural leaders voted to support a resolution acknowledging the nursing and health care worker shortage across Saskatchewan.

I'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 fix the rural health care staffing crisis.

This petition today is signed by individuals from Scott, Landis, Wilkie, Battleford, and Cut Knife. Mr. Speaker, I do so present.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to prohibit conversion therapy. This petition is more important than ever as we continue to hear allegations of abuse and discrimination of queer people in our province.

The undersigned residents would like to bring our attention to the following: conversion therapy use discredited and abusive practices which attempt to actively change the sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* names sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity as one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination; and, Mr. Speaker, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child indicate that children should not be discriminated against based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

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 ban the practice of conversion therapy and prohibit transporting youth and young adults outside Saskatchewan for such purposes.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories today reside in Regina. I do so present.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition calling on the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to fund in vitro fertilization treatments. Mr. Speaker, the undersigned residents here in Saskatchewan wish to bring to our attention the following: that IVF [in vitro fertilization] treatments are prohibitively expensive for many, with one cycle typically costing at least \$10,000; and that Saskatchewan people's ability to conceive should not depend on their socio-economic status; other provinces have created programs that financially assist in providing IVF treatments to those struggling to conceive.

I will read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition today are from Oxbow and Weyburn. I do so present.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to be back again presenting our petition calling for paid sick leave legislation. The undersigned residents would like to bring the following to our attention: a healthy workforce is good for the economy; lives could be saved if workers could afford to stay home when they're sick; no one should have to make the choice between going to work sick or risking the roof over their head by staying home; workers, doctors, and public health officials continue to call for paid sick leave in Saskatchewan; the official opposition has twice introduced paid sick leave legislation since the onset of the pandemic, calling for a minimum of 10 paid sick days each year and 14 days during a public health crisis.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to introduce and finally pass paid sick leave legislation.

The signatories today reside in Sturgeon Lake and Prince Albert. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Recognizing Service in the Canadian Armed Forces

Ms. Mowat: — I rise today to remember and recognize all our veterans and current serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces for their service to our nation. These people sacrificed while protecting our freedoms in our cherished democracy, and I am proud of this province's history of service.

As a retired captain in the Cadet Instructors Cadre, I've had the opportunity to participate in many Remembrance Day services over the years. I am honoured to lay a wreath in my home city of Saskatoon again this year after a few years of not gathering in person to pay our respects.

As we watch the tragic and senseless war in Ukraine, it is important to take a step back and appreciate the hard-fought freedoms we enjoy here today. We wish the same for our partners currently fighting Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

On behalf of the official opposition, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lest we forget.

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

COVID-19 Vaccine

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that the truth about COVID mRNA [messenger ribonucleic acid] injections is coming out loud and clear, a recent article in *The Atlantic* called for a pandemic amnesty for those who coerced others to take experimental shots. The people want to know why they lost their jobs for this so-called vaccine that has now proven to be neither safe nor effective. They want to know why this Premier lost patience with them and abusively made their lives uncomfortable. The people want accountability, Mr. Speaker. The people deserve accountability, Mr. Speaker.

Is this government going to beg for amnesty, or will it do the right thing and hold a full public commission of inquiry so Saskatchewan people can know the truth? "Let's focus on the future and fix the problems we still need to solve," states this article. Doctors and medical professionals who were sanctioned and silenced for trying to warn people are the ones who should be granted amnesty so they can tell Saskatchewan people the truth after they were prevented from holding to the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship.

Mr. Speaker, the people will not forget, but perhaps they can forgive. Thank you.

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

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, this month is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and so I rise today to speak to this mounting

crisis in our province. In light of recent events here in this legislature, it is more important now than ever to draw attention to the fact that Saskatchewan has the worst domestic violence rates of all the provinces, over double the national average.

We have overwhelmed and underfunded women's shelters, shelters that are being forced to turn away thousands of women and children at a time when they most desperately and urgently need support. It is important to be clear about what constitutes domestic violence. This description is from the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan website:

Domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence, can be physical, psychological, emotional, verbal, financial, sexual, and spiritual abuse, excessive jealousy and control, harassment after separation, and murder.

Mr. Speaker, second-stage shelters provide a long-term housing model that allows women and children to live in affordable and secure housing, away from abusive situations. They provide counselling and essential wraparound services. This month, as we mourn JoAnn Wilson and the thousands of women subjected to domestic violence in Saskatchewan every year, we call on the government to show meaningful leadership by finally committing to fund second-stage shelters in our province instead of only offering hollow apologies. Thank you.

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

Remembering Veterans

Mr. Lawrence: — Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, November 5th I was honoured to participate in the 10th anniversary Flags of Respect, Veterans Remembering Veterans event in Moose Jaw. Ron Roy, a veteran of the Canadian Forces, wanted to do something special with other former members to remember our local veterans that have passed. He thought that a nice way to show respect during the national time of remembrance was to visit each veteran that is buried in Moose Jaw cemeteries' veterans blocks and place a Canadian flag at their headstones. Ron and his wife, Jo-Ann, first started placing the flags on veterans' graves back in 2013 and have continued every year after that. In 2017, members from the Moose Jaw UN-NATO [United Nations-North Atlantic Treaty Organization] veterans group joined them, and they have been a big help since.

Mr. Speaker, Flags of Respect takes place on the first Saturday of November and more than 1,100 flags are placed each year. After the placement of the flags there is a gathering at the cenotaph in the cemetery to lay a wreath and say a few words. Others that attended this year's event were Bob Travele, president-elect of the Moose Jaw Legion Branch No. 59, as well as Don Purington, president of the Moose Jaw ANAVETS [Army, Navy & Air Force Veterans in Canada] No. 252. Mr. Speaker, Ron and Jo-Ann will continue this tradition for years to come and hope to inspire other veterans groups across Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

Freedom of Speech

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is Remembrance Day and I don't think there's probably a family in this Assembly that hasn't been affected. My Uncle Joe was a pilot, he enlisted with the RCAF [Royal Canadian Air Force] prior to Canada joining the war. His dream was to protect Canada's interests. He was such a good pilot that he became a flight instructor and instructed hundreds and hundreds of young men to pursue their dream. On December 1st, 1943, his plane, on a final flight of a young pilot before he got his wings, went missing. He went missing for over a year, Mr. Speaker, which caused great concern for my family, of course. My grandpa went into a deep depression and had to be committed to the Weyburn Psychiatric Hospital, Mr. Speaker, bringing my dad, who was 18, out of the Armed Forces, Mr. Speaker, to look after the family farm. All those sacrifices so we could stand here and speak freely, Mr. Speaker.

But with freedom of speech comes responsibility, responsibility of honesty. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chief Bobby Cameron, Vice-Chief David Pratt, Second Vice-Chief Dutch Lerat for taking down a tweet yesterday that the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] put up that was factually untrue, Mr. Speaker. I accept their sincere apology, Mr. Speaker, because what was tweeted was factually untrue.

[10:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Fourth Flight of Ukrainian Refugees Expected

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely proud to announce that registration is now open for the fourth flight of Ukrainian refugees to Saskatchewan. This flight will be the first one to land directly in Saskatoon, with over 200 Ukrainians, on November 23rd. Upon their arrival these newcomers will be provided with a temporary living space and one-stop shopping to provide them with service to get them established. This is the fourth of five flights that we have partnered with Solidaire and Open Arms to bring to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I've been touched by both stories of these people that have arrived here and the generosity that the people of Saskatchewan have shown. And we've been fortunate to have young people like Andrian and Alex here, and I look forward to seeing them after question period. Vitajemo to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also very proud to say that this brings the total number of displaced Ukrainians to over 2,500 to Saskatchewan. Although the circumstances of their arrival are unfortunate, we are very happy to have these individuals in safe places within our borders. Saskatchewan will always stand by the Ukrainian brothers and sisters in their defence against tyranny. Slava Ukraine.

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

Scholarship of Honour Recipients

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we recognize

and thank Saskatchewan's dedicated citizens serving in Canada's Armed Forces through the Saskatchewan Scholarship of Honour. Mr. Speaker, this scholarship provides a one-time award of \$5,000 toward post-secondary education to returning Canadian Armed Forces members, as well as the spouses and children of injured or fallen members. This is a small token of our gratitude and respect for the brave individuals who protect our country. Since 2009, 259 scholarships have been awarded, totalling nearly \$1.3 million.

Mr. Speaker, this year we celebrate 11 recipients. Four are Canadian Armed Forces members and seven are family members. I would like to recognize and congratulate the following recipient who has joined us this morning: Yahia Benbouazza. Welcome.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members join me in showing our appreciation for the contributions the recipients have made to our country, thank them for their sacrifice, and wish them the best of luck in their post-secondary studies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Rollout of Employee Administrative System for Health Care Workers

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, our health system is broken, and it's the Minister of Health's job to fix it. And there's lots of places he could start. People can't find family doctors or access primary care. There are 36,000 people on the wait-list for surgeries. Hospitals are shuttered across the province, and respiratory illnesses are running wild in classrooms and schools.

This is the absolute worst time for this government's botched AIMS [administrative information management system] program to be wreaking havoc. What is the plan to fix it? And what went wrong?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And in reference to the first part of the question, there are family physicians actually accepting patients. We've been able to find about seven or eight family physicians, as of the beginning of this month, that are now accepting patients in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, partly because of our human resource plan that we've been able to implement, our four-point plan.

We've brought 107 new doctors into Saskatchewan in the last 12 months, and 23 alone just in September, Mr. Speaker. This is why we implemented the plan back in March with the budgetary numbers.

As far as AIMS, Mr. Speaker, obviously there were some challenges identified with that program. Mr. Speaker, we since put that program . . . paused it, and we've gone back to our legacy system. But I'm pleased to report that everybody will receive their payroll this week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Leader of the

Opposition.

Ms. Mowat: — Two months the people of Saskatoon waited before there were doctors accepting new physicians, Mr. Speaker, two months while this government sat on their hands. And now they want a pat on the back. It's completely unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, this AIMS project was years in the making, and it was that minister's responsibility to make sure that it was implemented successfully. Earlier this week he wasn't able to answer basic questions about what this means for our health system. Now he's had a few days to get caught up. To the minister: how much will this botched AIMS rollout cost Saskatchewan people, and when will it be up back online?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And again I've clarified this for the House. This was bringing together all of the former health regions under one system. This was over 80 legacy systems. Some of those systems were over 50 years old. I know that there's not too many people out in the communities of Saskatchewan that are using tech that's 50 years old, Mr. Speaker.

That's why we had to upgrade the AIMS system. We ran into some issues with that, Mr. Speaker. We've paused it. We've gone back to our legacy systems to be able to make sure that everybody was able to get payroll.

Mr. Speaker, they're fearmongering over there about this. They've been doing that all week. We've been able to get the payroll, and I want to thank the people at the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] that were able to work throughout the weekend and throughout this week to make sure that they got the payroll done. Considering tomorrow is a stat holiday, they had to do that one day earlier, and I want to thank them for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Shame on that Minister of Health for diminishing the very real concerns that health care workers have, being put forward. Mr. Speaker, this project is expected to cost \$166 million, and it was pulled only a week after it went live. Saskatchewan people deserve answers.

Provinces and countries are all in competition for scarce health care workers, and it's that government's job to show that Saskatchewan, the birthplace of medicare, is the most attractive place to live and work. This government's mismanagement of literally everything is making that a very hard story to tell.

Does the minister recognize that this situation doesn't just harm our health care workers and patients, it hurts our ability to attract and retain desperately needed health care workers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — First off, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Deputy Leader over there for acknowledging that these are

challenges that Saskatchewan is facing, and also communities across the country are facing this health care. This isn't unique to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we did pause the AIMS system because there was some challenges between the scheduling and payroll. We had those contingencies built in to be able to make sure that the people in our health care system got paid. Mr. Speaker, we never ran a payroll system under AIMS. It was not working, so we paused it. The SHA made this decision, and I supported it to make sure that the health care workers in Saskatchewan were getting paid.

What's not helping our recruiting, Mr. Speaker, is them continuously running down the doctors, continuously running down our health care system, and continuously running down our province. That doesn't help bring people to this province. What we're doing on this side of this House will. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — I do not understand the imaginary world that the Health minister is living in, but we are echoing the concerns of front-line workers, Mr. Speaker. He's had the week to catch up, and absolutely no answers from that side of the House. It's become very clear that the Sask Party government is more interested in playing politics than actually doing their day-to-day jobs.

This is a pattern of behaviour. We've seen megaproject after megaproject mismanaged, especially in IT [information technology]. We've seen the massive cost overruns in the Linkin program in Social Services, originally slated for 15 million, exploding to \$76 million. Now we're two years into this \$166 million megaproject, and now health care workers aren't sure they're going to get paid.

For a lot of health care workers, tomorrow is supposed to be payday. How can the minister be so sure that people will get paid if he can't even tell us what went wrong?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I know they write the questions over there in a series, but I've already answered that question, Mr. Speaker, that everybody in the health care system . . . The SHA has informed me this morning that payroll has been met.

Obviously with the complexity of having 48,000 people, there are payroll discrepancies on every payroll, Mr. Speaker. But what I can assure you is that this health care system is working. We've been able to recruit 107 doctors, which again they completely ignore. We have 150 more nurses in our post-secondary education. We have recruitment missions going around the world, Mr. Speaker. People want to choose Saskatchewan, and we want to be able to bring them there.

Again, Mr. Speaker, what doesn't help is when they're continuously running down the province, continuously running down our health care system, our economic outlook. This is all

they can do. Maybe they should start talking about some of the positives that are happening with the reopenings and the doctors that we have hired in the last month. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Student Outcomes in Saskatchewan Schools

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, you know what doesn't help recruiting and retaining doctors? Being internationally shamed into apologizing for inviting a convicted killer to the legislature, or having a Minister of Education who refuses to admit the Loch Ness is not real.

Mr. Speaker, this week the Minister of Education said students in qualified independent schools have higher grades than students in the public and Catholic schools. Are qualified independent schools better, or are they just not held to the same standards?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't saying that they were better or worse than any other school in the province. What I was referring to was the outcomes that have been demonstrated over the last year by all of our different school categories in the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what I was trying to show is that the curriculum of these schools has been brought in line with the provincial curriculum over the last decade or so. Mr. Speaker, these are the outcomes that were achieved by all of these different schools by writing departmentals in the last year.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, students told that minister specifically that the qualified independent schools are not held to the same standards and that their marks are inflated. But perhaps that minister turned a blind eye to those concerns as well. Now does the minister really think that schools teaching human-dinosaur coexistence matches with the curriculum like he just said and delivers the same quality of education as our public and Catholic schools?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The information that I provided — and I'll say this again for the member opposite — the information that was provided is the results that have been sent into the ministry by students all across this province who wrote departmentals last year, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, these are not marks that are inflated by the teachers in any particular school. These are departmentals written by the department or the ministry and administered by a number of schools all across the province over the last year. So the numbers that I shared show that based on the curriculum across the province, Mr. Speaker, that students are achieving roughly the same marks regardless of where they are educated because they are in line with the curriculum.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, the problem with the minister's comparison is the gatekeeping that goes on in these schools, and he knows full well that public and Catholic schools in our system do not get to pick and choose which students come just because they can afford it. They take every student in, Mr. Speaker.

Let me quote from the minister's comments yesterday. He said, "... 57.7 per cent of qualified independent schools' students scored higher than 80 per cent in their marks. The provincial average is just 54 per cent."

Mr. Speaker, I hope this minister realizes he's not the minister for qualified independent schools. He's actually the minister for all of education. As Minister of Education, does he think it's appropriate to drag our public and Catholic schools through the mud just to score political points?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly that's not what I was doing. Mr. Speaker, what has been said by the members opposite is that somehow in 2022 the curriculum that is being taught outside of our public and Catholic school divisions is not in line with the curriculum, Mr. Speaker.

That may have been the case back in 2005 and in fairness part of 2012 when the new regulations were put in place. But, Mr. Speaker, the ministry has worked very hard to ensure that the curriculum at all of our schools is in line with the provincial curriculum, Mr. Speaker.

And so what I was demonstrating is that regardless of what category of school students are in, that roughly speaking all of our students are performing at or near the same mark, whether they're in an independent school or whether they're in a public school, Mr. Speaker. And this is based on departmental results last year, which show that students even in independent schools are learning the curriculum and can score near where public school students are when it comes to departmentals.

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

Media Request to Royal Saskatchewan Museum

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week a member of the media put in a request to the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, trying to arrange an interview with a scientist to talk about dinosaurs. That request got shut down by the Minister of Education. We asked about this earlier this week, but we received no answer.

Can the Minister for Parks, Culture and Sport, who is responsible for the RSM [Royal Saskatchewan Museum], explain why a request to a scientist was shut down?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to welcome the member's first question in the House. What I was able to say to the media is that we wanted to ensure that correct information was being provided in terms of what independent schools are teaching in terms of the curriculum, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said in my last answer, certainly things have changed since 2005 and in fairness since 2012, prior to when the regulations were in place. The curriculum is up to ... the provincial curriculum in terms of the independent schools, Mr. Speaker. And as I said, I have no problem with a reporter speaking to a paleontologist.

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

Mr. Teed: — That's correct info like the existence of the Loch Ness monster. Muzzling scientists is never a good look for governments, and political offices should never be blocking media requests just because the questions don't suit the government's narrative. This is more failed leadership from this government, playing politics with science at the province's most important museum.

Does the Minister for Parks, Culture and Sport take any responsibility for this fiasco? And what is she going to do to ensure that this never happens again?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again as I indicated to the media, we wanted to ensure that we had put out a statement because it was in relation to what was alleged to be being taught in 2022 in a particular school or in a particular set of schools.

We wanted to clarify that in fact the provincial curriculum is being taught in those schools, Mr. Speaker. The ministry worked with a curriculum consultant back about a decade ago to ensure that what was being taught in schools is in line with the curriculum. And, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, and I'll say it again, I certainly don't have any problem with media speaking to a paleontologist from the RSM.

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

Emergency Shelter and Housing Supports

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We didn't spend our summer on the golf course, on separatist tours, or penning nationally mocked white papers. We talked to mayors, councils, front-line housing organizations, and they told us that someone was going to have to freeze to death before this Sask Party government took action on housing and shelters.

I was desperately hoping that they were wrong, but sadly that wasn't the case. At least two individuals lost their lives to exposure this week alone. Why can't this government be proactive for once? Why did people have to lose their lives for the Sask Party government to act?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, that's just not an accurate statement. We work every day, we work every day on this complex issue. The former minister did a lot of work, the minister before that, Mr. Speaker. We work with our CBO [community-based organization] partners, with our municipal partners, with Indigenous organizations on this very complex issue.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I spoke about the work that has been done: \$10 million in year to support two new pilot projects here in our province, Mr. Speaker; just recently \$1.7 million to enhance our shelter spaces in the province. When we became government, there was 244 spaces. There's 388 now.

Mr. Speaker, I know there's need out there. That's why we increased it for this winter by 60 spaces, as well as increased funding to help secure those spaces. Several housing announcements all throughout the summer. Supportive and wraparound services. Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work with our partners.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the minister should know that that ministry's recent record is one of cuts to housing supports across the board. The 1.7 million just mentioned was announced the day that someone froze to death, and the warming strategy was announced yesterday, after these deaths occurred, Mr. Speaker. Shame on them. People have frozen to death outside because the Sask Party government has no housing plan.

We were talking to the mayor and council in Prince Albert in early October, five weeks ago. We were told homelessness had actually doubled. Well you know what one of the most pressing issues were, Mr. Speaker? Emergency housing ahead of winter. They were actually talking about busing folks to Calgary. They were sounding the alarm, Mr. Speaker.

And now someone has died and it's too little, too late. To the Minister of Social Services: what is the plan?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, again I disagree with the characterization that this was just started yesterday or the day before that. We've been working for months, and many years before that on this very difficult and complex scenario we have in our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, if anyone presents themselves to the Ministry of Social Services or any of our partners, we strive to find them a safe place to stay within emergency shelter. Or failing that, if they're not available in that community or they're overfull that particular night, we'll work to find hotels for them, Mr. Speaker.

Again I talked about the emergency wellness centre in Saskatoon with the Saskatoon Tribal Council, partnership with RT/SIS [Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services Inc.], the sawēyihotān project in Saskatoon, Indigenous-led projects. Again we work with all human services ministries. We work very hard with our partners again. And I just want to say in general, please anyone

out there report anyone in distress at this time of year, Mr. Speaker, to police or Social Services or the many agencies that . . .

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, it's disappointing to hear that same talking point: just call the minister. That is not a policy for protecting people who are seeking emergency shelter and we all know it.

Mr. Speaker, from top to bottom this government has no housing plan, and that includes management of their Sask Housing stock. People are dying on the streets while thousands of units sit empty. And they're empty because people can't qualify to live in them or they aren't able to live in them due to the conditions. Like Dominika Kosowska, the woman in Saskatoon who is sounding the alarm on a rat infestation in her housing unit. And that is not an isolated incident, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister think it's acceptable for provincially owned housing to be full of rats? What is his plan to fix this?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, in terms of unfilled units, there's roughly 18,000 units right across the province, sometimes in locations where they're not needed, other locations where they may not be appropriate for what a client or a potential tenant is looking for — maybe not enough bedrooms, certain location, elevator, etc.

But in terms of any sort of pests in SHC [Saskatchewan Housing Corporation] buildings, Mr. Speaker, no, it's not acceptable. And that's why we work very hard. The local housing authority works with tenants on inspection when somebody enters an agreement. But also upon report, and that is taken care of by the local housing authority, Mr. Speaker. And that is worked on until the situation is resolved, or it should be, yeah, Mr. Speaker. And so the provincial housing authority works with local housing authorities on the maintenance and repair of units every day.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry. These issues are not being addressed. Dominika had to go to media after pounding down the door of Saskatoon Housing Authority to have this issue addressed, and it wasn't over time, Mr. Speaker. And she is not alone, and many are not in her position to go to media to speak openly about their issues.

Speaking of Dominika, Mr. Speaker, she came here from Poland where she was a teacher, where she was a business owner. And since coming to Saskatchewan she's become the survivor of domestic violence and has this to say about her experience with Saskatchewan housing:

I am trying my hardest to stand on my feet by applying for jobs, volunteering in the community, and training myself as a trauma counsellor. I never imagined my child watching me live like this, fighting for a right to a normal home. This is not the Canada that was advertised in Europe, not the

Canada I imagined my son growing up in.

The Minister of Justice just yesterday said that Sask Housing is being looked at for victims of domestic violence. Is this what survivors of domestic violence can expect?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, every year we budget about \$35 million for the upkeep and repair of Sask Housing units right across the province. We'll continue to do that. If there is a report of pests or whatever it may be, Mr. Speaker, any repairs that are needed, the local housing authority should be looking at that. And we will ask them to continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

When I heard about this, I asked the housing authority to look into this situation, and officials are. And, Mr. Speaker, we will apply treatments by the local authority. If there is a professional restorer or pest remediation required to come in, we will do that and find temporary locations for people to move to, either a hotel or another unit, while that work is being done.

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

Interpersonal Violence Rates and Support for Second-Stage Shelters

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words, and this government's actions have been saying an awful lot lately — inviting a convicted wife killer to the legislature; all of the things we talked about in question period today; and ministers heckling during very serious questions like we saw the Minister of Justice doing on questions of intimate partner violence yesterday, something we certainly wouldn't have seen ministers of Justice past do.

Mr. Speaker, lots of actions sending the wrong message, but here's a chance for that government to do an action that sends the right message. Will the government finally commit to funding operations for second-stage shelters today?

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

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Mr. Speaker, let's not forget that the Women's Shelters Canada report in 2019 identified that across Canada affordable housing was hard to find 85 per cent of the time; in Saskatchewan only 8 per cent. Which isn't to say that the 8 per cent isn't a call for all of us to do everything we can.

Mr. Speaker, they've raised SOFIA House, and the Minister of Government Relations toured it last week. The Minister of Policing is touring it today. I'm going in the next week or so. And I've heard very positive things about Hope Restored, another very worthy organization which is addressing the very alarming trafficking side to this conversation, Mr. Speaker, and more on that this week.

But I've also heard that there's not a lot of appetite from these organizations to get drawn into the negativity of that side and that side's dismissal and discrediting of the good work that's being

done around intervention and prevention, Mr. Speaker, \$25 million investment by the government that we can complement and wrap services around, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, what we're doing on this side of the House is amplifying those organizations' desperate calls for funding from this government. Enough of the political rhetoric. I'm glad the ministers are finally visiting these organizations, but will they also answer their calls for funding? Will the government commit to operational funding for second-stage shelters today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Mr. Speaker, we were just speaking this morning as colleagues about a very challenging situation, a woman fleeing interpersonal violence. And we had three offices — two ministers' offices, a constituency office — working together to make sure that she was safe. And, Mr. Speaker, it was a rush. By 1:10, in my understanding, this morning, a relationship had been established. We had found this victim of violence the help and shelter that she needed.

We can all agree that these situations are tragic, that the rates are too high. But the will is there, Mr. Speaker, the investment, the legislation, the exploration now about the best ways to build second-stage housing around intervention and prevention, Mr. Speaker, and do what we can. And we do.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 100 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Accretion) Amendment Act, 2022*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 100, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Accretion) Amendment Act, 2022* be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill 100 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.

Principal Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time?

I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

[11:00]

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 89, *The Income Tax (Affordability) Amendment Act, 2022* without amendment.

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

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

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in committee of the bill on No. 89 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

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

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 89 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker, recorded vote. Recorded vote.

The Speaker: — Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 11:01 until 11:10.]

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 89, *The Income Tax (Affordability) Amendment Act, 2022* without amendment be read the third time and passed under its title. All

the members in favour please stand.

[Yeas — 52]

Moe	Stewart	McMorris
Reiter	Merriman	Harpauer
Morgan	Duncan	Tell
Wyant	Makowsky	Docherty
Cheveldayoff	Bradshaw	Cockrill
Skoropad	Eyre	J. Harrison
Carr	Hindley	Marit
Hargrave	Fiaz	Lambert
Dennis	A. Ross	Ottenbreit
Francis	C. Young	Steele
Lawrence	Kaeding	McLeod
Meyers	Friesen	Grewal
Bonk	Goudy	Keisig
Lemaigre	Jenson	D. Harrison
Domotor	Nippi-Albright	Mowat
Wotherspoon	Teed	A. Young
Sarauer	Conway	Bowes
Wilson		

The Speaker: — Opposed please stand. Seeing none.

[Nays — nil]

Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour, 52; those opposed, 0.

The Speaker: — I declare the motion carried.

[11:15]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answer to question 40.

The Speaker: — Question 40 is ordered.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Utility Rates and Affordability

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to our able Clerks for the good signal here. It's time to rise and debate, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure here to enter into debate on behalf of Saskatchewan people fighting for affordability against a government that's just not up to the test, just not up to the challenge that Saskatchewan people are facing, that are all too often really proving themselves out of touch on, well, so many fronts but certainly as it relates to the affordability crisis that Saskatchewan people are facing.

Certainly it was evident last night and with respect to the vote that we just had, Mr. Speaker, a government that was unwilling to expand that program, the rebate, Mr. Speaker, in a way that would have been fair and inclusive and equitable and recognizing the costs that families are enduring, Mr. Speaker.

But I think we have to look at the situation that we're facing in Saskatchewan right now and around the world. We have sky-high revenues . . . Sorry, I'm getting thrown off, Mr. Speaker. Sky-high revenues, Mr. Speaker, for the province of Saskatchewan, and it's a direct result of the extraordinary situation that's going on in our world, the unforgivable invasion of Ukraine by Putin — the atrocity, Mr. Speaker, that so many are living. We talked about it here today, the displacement of Ukrainians, Mr. Speaker, that we can only imagine the hardship and the realities that folks are experiencing on these fronts.

And you know, here we are at Remembrance Day, Mr. Speaker, and we're 80 years on from World War II pretty much, Mr. Speaker, and that horrible conflict. And you know, we weren't supposed to have conflicts like this again, and here we have this conflict in Europe that's disrupting so many people's lives. And we see of course those that are finding refuge and safety and security in Saskatchewan. We recognized some of those people here today.

But there's other consequences for Saskatchewan as well, consequences as a result of that conflict. What we have seen is that already increasing revenue streams for the province of Saskatchewan have been put through the roof, Mr. Speaker, and you know, windfall revenues, windfall profits for many of our industries, Mr. Speaker. And certainly Saskatchewan plays a very important role at this time and always in making sure we get our resources, our products to market, Mr. Speaker, and importantly to the world as a democracy, as a stable democracy.

But the consequence right now is that we have windfall profits in industry and windfall revenues for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and we see that in the budget. Of course we were clear about this at budget time. But we had a government though that denied that reality, that hid and hoarded those windfall revenues, that sat on those dollars, and that denied Saskatchewan people the support they needed in the other reality that's going on in our province, which is an affordability crisis, Mr. Speaker.

Coming through COVID of course inflation became a real challenge for Saskatchewan people. This was exacerbated and made so much worse by that inexcusable, unforgivable invasion, Mr. Speaker, where you take already snarled supply chains and shuttered factories and lost capacity on this front, and then overlay that with the war, Mr. Speaker. And of course it shot food and fuel through the roof, and much more, Mr. Speaker.

So this is the reality that Saskatchewan people are living, is that they're facing an affordability crisis, Mr. Speaker. The province of Saskatchewan, the Government of Saskatchewan has the other reality, which is windfall revenues, so riches. The dollars are rolling in in a way like never before, Mr. Speaker. And of course Saskatchewan people are the owners of those resources, Mr. Speaker, and they deserve fair relief at this time.

You know, we've been calling for this since budget time. We've been pushing for affordability measures, Mr. Speaker. We were

pushing for that in advance of budget, saying this is the reality that people are facing: crushing cost of living, gas prices, fuel, the price at the pumps that's been hovering from a buck seventy to two bucks a litre this last year, Mr. Speaker, and food, you know, up in so many ways.

In fact if you look at the numbers right now . . . And you know, all of us know this when we go to the grocery store, Mr. Speaker, but think of going there with, you know, an incredibly tight budget right now, Mr. Speaker, because I know everyone here will be seeing those increases. But boy, you know, for those working so damned hard and with a low wage, Mr. Speaker, the challenge is real. Cereals are up 18 per cent this year, baked goods 15 per cent, fruit and vegetables over 12 per cent.

Of course we've talked about what the cost of fuel is, and we see that cost for every person that is trying to put a bit of fuel in the tank, Mr. Speaker. And we see that as well being built in and baked in to the cost at the grocery store and on so many other goods and services as well, Mr. Speaker. And you think of that reality for our . . .

You know, I think of the situation for a hard-working family in Regina, Mr. Speaker. Many families have awfully low wages but are working so hard to do all they can to make sure that their kids have some food in the fridge, the basics that they need, and that they're keeping the lights on. But the math just doesn't work for them, Mr. Speaker.

I can think of so many folks, Mr. Speaker, that are working two jobs and three jobs, just trying to make this work. They deserve a government that would provide some relief. I think of those families in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that are, you know, accessing recreation, trying to support getting to activities and events with kids, which means getting on the road. And yeah, that means putting fuel in the tank, Mr. Speaker, with these exorbitant prices, all while all families as well are trying to clothe their children, Mr. Speaker, make sure that the basics are there.

So we've pushed from day one, Mr. Speaker, and called on this government well in advance of this budget that was delivered in March, to recognize the crushing cost of living and the extraordinary situation that families face and, with the windfall revenues that this province is receiving, to provide some relief for Saskatchewan people.

Of course we fought hard for a dividend, Mr. Speaker, some support out to families now, some one-time relief. We think, Mr. Speaker, that that should have recognized the costs that parents have in raising children, that there should've been recognition for the cost of children as well. And we're disappointed, Mr. Speaker, that this government just was unwilling to entertain any changes to the program that they've announced that would've improved it in a way and brought fairness to it, Mr. Speaker.

It defies common sense and it's certainly not fair. And it's not right that a wealthy couple with no children, Mr. Speaker, will get two rebates. Meanwhile a hard-working mom or dad or grandma or grandpa or mosôm or kohkum with 3 or 4 or 5 kids and all the costs that we just talked about, Mr. Speaker, — just think of that grocery counter and the cost of those bills for a young family — that they're going to get one rebate.

Now we have, you know, bounty within this province. We're a rich province. We have windfall revenues. The people of Saskatchewan own those resources. And when you extend a program like the one that we've just seen, we have the opportunity to deliver that in a way that would have been much more fair, much more equitable, and much more impactful for people and families across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We've made that case. I followed up again, pushing hard with the Minister of Finance last night in calling for some change to that program to fix that program. It just wasn't on for them, Mr. Speaker. She was very clear that she had no interest in adapting the program or expanding it to support hard-working families as well in the way that they need to be recognized, Mr. Speaker.

Of course we've also been pushing for the elimination of the PST [provincial sales tax] on children's clothes and on restaurant meals, Mr. Speaker. You know, a few years back this government brought forward, well actually the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history, Mr. Speaker, when they stuck the PST and really shifted taxation heavily onto households, heavily onto people, Mr. Speaker, when they cranked up the taxes in a historic way with the PST, sticking it on insurance, sticking it on construction, sticking it on used cars, sticking it on children's clothes, sticking it on restaurants, Mr. Speaker, sticking Saskatchewan people and families that are working so hard with the bill for their years of mismanagement, Mr. Speaker, a consequence that is unfair and not right. So we've called for relief on those fronts, Mr. Speaker.

And then what did we see in budget? Well we saw a government that wasn't straightforward with the fiscal situation, that hid and hoarded windfall revenues, all to deny Saskatchewan people of the support they deserve. They didn't bring forward a dime of relief for Saskatchewan people in face of a cost-of-living crisis, Mr. Speaker. And to make matters worse for Saskatchewan people, they piled on. They piled on with new taxes and fee hikes, Mr. Speaker, from property taxes to all the tax hikes and the PST being applied to the hardest hit industries, Mr. Speaker, putting more costs on Saskatchewan people, cranking up property taxes, Mr. Speaker, if you can imagine.

And then piling on, Mr. Speaker, with an 8 per cent hike to the cost of power and a 23 per cent hike to the cost of energy at a time right now . . . It's, you know, I think the windchill's minus 28 out there this morning. It was brisk out there for my morning run, Mr. Speaker, but pretty lucky to be in a warm home, while a lot of people are doing all they can to figure out how they're going to pay that bill this winter, Mr. Speaker.

It is unimaginable and lacks basic decency that you'd have a government piling on with these new taxes, with these energy bill and power bill hikes at a time of an affordability crisis and at a time when they've got a big, fat wallet over there, Mr. Speaker, windfall revenues that are filling the provincial coffers, a consequence of conflict that just shouldn't be happening, Mr. Speaker, unforgivable invasion by Putin.

So we call on this government of course to ensure the one-time support, and we push for that to be inclusive, to actually get out there in a meaningful way, to recognize the reality for families as well, you know. That's something that this government was uninterested in doing, and they delayed any support on these

fronts. We continue to call on this government to provide relief.

We brought forward a motion to this Assembly in face of the incredible costs at the pumps, Mr. Speaker. Folks breaking the bank just to fill the tanks, and a government that collects 15 cents a litre with their fuel tax, Mr. Speaker — 15 cent tax per litre on fuel during a time of record fuel prices for families and people and businesses. We called for a suspension of the fuel tax. Well what did that government do, Mr. Speaker? They voted that down.

This government has proven themselves, this Sask Party, completely out of touch with the realities that families and people and businesses are facing. They've proven themselves not up to the task, not up to the challenge. No, we're not interested in rising to the occasion in the extraordinary situation that we face, Mr. Speaker, and continuing to pile on. Uninterested in addressing the cost-of-living crisis on so many fronts. Uninterested in even lifting a finger on the needed beef-pricing investigation that has been called for by livestock producers across Saskatchewan and across the agricultural sector, Mr. Speaker, an issue that if we could address the anti-competitive behaviours in the meat-packing industry and build capacity here in Saskatchewan, that we could actually ensure fairness for producers and fairness for consumers, Mr. Speaker.

This should be a win-win, Mr. Speaker, but we see a government that, you know, seems to be uninterested in doing the hard work of governing and out of touch with the reality of Saskatchewan people.

[11:30]

I'll move this motion here, Mr. Speaker:

That this Assembly calls on the government to cancel its plans to increase SaskPower and SaskEnergy rates . . .

I'll move the following motion, Mr. Speaker. I'll start over:

That the Assembly calls on the government to cancel its plans to increase SaskPower and SaskEnergy rates during an affordability crisis.

I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Regina Rosemont:

That the Assembly calls on the government to cancel its plans to increase SaskPower and SaskEnergy rates during an affordability crisis.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm honoured to enter into today's debate, and I would like to begin by indicating that I will not be supporting the motion put forth by the opposition.

I would like to start off by sincerely thanking the employees of SaskPower and SaskEnergy for their dedication to their work.

SaskPower have had to contend with some of the worst weather storms we've seen over the past year and have worked diligently around the clock in blizzardly weather to try and restore services in a timely manner to our Saskatchewan residents, something which . . . This has been greatly appreciated by this government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the motion put forward today speaks directly about affordability, and I am proud of this government's record when it comes to this issue.

First of all, when we speak to power and energy rates, this province has the second-lowest utility rate bundle in all of Canada, which includes power, energy, phone, and the lowest vehicle insurance. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the new Leader of the Opposition was quoted as saying on September 13th that, and I quote, "In an affordability crisis, we have some of the best rates as a province." We agree, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we are going to continue our track record of keeping Saskatchewan affordable. And I believe this speaks to our government's commitment to our residents.

When you look at the multitude of programs and policies that this government has brought forward over the years to offer our residents, I think it is very clear where we stand on supporting our residents when it comes to affordability. Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only do we have one of the lowest rate bundles in the country, I think it's important to mention that this government is the one that reduced the amount of personal income tax that individuals pay. They removed 112,000 low-income citizens off of the provincial income tax roll, as a family of four doesn't pay income tax on the first \$53,435 that they earn.

Now let's compare that to the NDP's record whereby that same family of four started paying provincial income tax on a mere income of \$26,150. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the opposition likes to portray that they are the defenders of the people that are on lower incomes. While they like to pretend to represent the lower income earners, it's interesting to note that when they were in power they froze the seniors' income plan to \$90 per month. Mr. Speaker, did you hear what I said? They froze the seniors' income plan to \$90 per month for 16 consecutive years. Apparently there was no inflation during that time, and the cost of living for groceries, fuel, and medical expenses never changed for them.

And then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have the audacity to get up in this House and accuse our government for not doing enough for low-income earners, when we've done more than they ever did. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government has in fact raised the seniors' income plan by triple since 2007, and we've only been in power for 15 years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has made recent announcements to assist our residents with respect to affordability, and not just this year but previous years as well. For example, how many provinces have provided a tax credit for home renovations for the past two years? I know that we have had many constituents that have used this incentive to provide for necessary improvements to their home as well as improvements to help reduce their energy costs, which saves them money on a monthly basis going forward. Considering the opposition member from Saskatoon Nutana is on record for opposing our home renovation tax credit because it was for all home

renovations and not just green renovations, speaks to their ability to relate to the average taxpayer in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that inflation has had an impact on our residents, but we also know that this has affected the operations of our Crown corporations. I think we need to be reminded that SaskPower has not had a rate increase for more than four years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which was due to the diligent work that they have done through finding internal efficiencies.

Last year SaskPower invested 922 million in infrastructure investments, serving core infrastructure improvements as well as rebuilding 700 kilometres of power lines and replacing approximately 8,500 wooden poles. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these capital investments that SaskPower is making to improve their infrastructure is necessary to ensure that we have a safe and reliable power grid which is a benefit to everyone in the province.

We can't afford to put on hold improving our aging infrastructure to ensure the viability of SaskPower now and into the future for our children and our grandchildren. That is why this government is committed to significantly increasing the amount of renewable electricity generated from the present 35 to 50 per cent by 2030. This will include additions to our existing power generation sources which will comprise of wind, solar, hydro, biomass, geothermal, natural gas, and potentially nuclear in the future.

With a growing economy and a growing demand for power we have to ensure that we have the ability to serve a growing population, which will help us sustain public services going forward, including things such as our public health care system. Mr. Deputy Speaker, having more investments and attracting more businesses, resulting in more jobs, is growth that works for everyone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, world events have increased many commodity prices. The price of natural gas has increased by more than three times over the past two years. SaskEnergy is conscious of the impact rate increases have on the people and businesses of Saskatchewan and takes steps to ensure that the costs are controlled. That is why SaskEnergy has been managing costs and limiting possible rate increases through internal efficiencies and a hedging strategy. These management and control strategies have assisted in SaskEnergy achieving 56.5 million in cost reductions since 2009, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and has helped suppress the necessity of increasing the rates to what they would have been otherwise. This has resulted in a significant benefit to our residents in terms of maintaining the rates at a reasonable cost.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we have to realize that if it wasn't for the carbon tax that the federal government has implemented in the first place, that we would be able to sustain our rates at a lower level. Mr. Deputy Speaker, considering what started out as a carbon tax which was never supposed to go higher than \$70 per tonne to combat greenhouse gas emissions has now escalated to what will be a maximum of \$170 per tonne by 2030; that is, if the Liberals don't decide to increase the maximum again and if the NDP continues to support the Trudeau government like they have in the past.

If the opposition was truly concerned about increases in

affordability and costs to our residents, they would support the Saskatchewan-first legislation which is designed to protect our province's residents and our economic future. This government introduced *The Saskatchewan First Act* to defend our economic autonomy. We believe that Saskatchewan has the constitutional right to control our natural resources and that we are the ones that decide our economic destiny as spelled out in section 92A of the Canadian Constitution as amended in 1982. This bill will ensure that our residents are the ones that will receive the direct benefit and safeguard our resources — because we have what the world wants and needs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, food, fuel, and fertilizer — and that we will not allow the federal government to impede our economic plan that will provide growth that works for everyone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you consider what the NDP, when they were in power, they raised the PST three times. They raised the personal income tax rate twice, the business tax four times, raised fuel taxes as well as tobacco and alcohol taxes several times. I don't think they have a record to stand on when it comes to defending the affordability of the general public.

When they were in power, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they didn't have a graduate retention program to keep our children in the province. They did not have a children's drug plan. They didn't have an active family benefit, and they provided no support for diabetics or for children on the autism spectrum. They didn't provide for a first homebuyers tax credit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and nor did they provide a volunteer first responder firefighter tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, when I'm finishing writing this set of remarks and comments for the debate here today, I spent time reflecting on the past two years that I've had the privilege of serving as the member representing the government of the people of Cut Knife-Turtleford. I'm so proud of this government and its record and what they have accomplished in my first two years. When I looked back at the investments we have made and how that affects our economy in terms of the growth that it provides and the opportunities to our businesses, our residents, I honestly believe that the future looks very bright for this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the growth of this provincial economy and the jobs that come along with that growth will only help sustain the affordability of the services that this government provides to its residents. If we want to ensure that our residents truly have the best chance of maintaining and sustaining those services at an affordable level, then we have to make sure that we do all that we can to protect the development of our resources and our economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing, it is for these reasons that I've mentioned that I will not be supporting the motion put forward today by the members opposite. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — The member cared so much about this he left 30 whole seconds on the clock where he could have talked about how much he cared about supporting Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure and honour to rise and enter into this 75-minute debate, a very important 75-minute debate calling

on the Sask Party to scrap the rate hikes for SaskPower and SaskEnergy, especially in light of the really unprecedented economic situation we're in right now, the financial crush we're seeing with the rising rates of inflation and the impact that's having on families in this province, in particular gas and groceries, Mr. Speaker.

The cost of gas we saw over the summer, due in part because of the illegal invasion of Ukraine and other factors internationally, really skyrocketed over the summer at a time when families often decide to go on road trips to visit other families, to go on vacations. And we saw those families having to make some tough decisions and scrap those sorts of plans because of the crunch that they were really experiencing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

At that time we called on this government to pause the fuel tax surcharge that happens for everybody that fills their tank at the pump. They pay the province money in fuel tax, Madam Speaker. We asked for a pause at that time; heard nothing but crickets from this government.

What do we get instead, Madam Speaker? We get this announcement of rate hikes, another burden on Saskatchewan families. SaskPower rate hike of 8 per cent total. There's 4 per cent now and then 4 per cent later. A SaskEnergy rate hike of 17 per cent, 17 per cent for homes, Madam Speaker, and 23 per cent for small businesses. That's no small fee. That's nothing to shake a stick at or to sneeze at. It's significant for families, Madam Speaker.

And when we're seeing everything else that's being added on to families' budgets, like the increase in gas, like the increase to grocery bills, this does nothing more but add to the stress that we're seeing so many families dealing with, Madam Speaker. And it's particularly pertinent to Saskatchewan when we are the worst in the province in terms of our rates of mortgage delinquency, Madam Speaker. We are also the worst in the province for our minimum wage, Madam Speaker.

And this Sask Party government's really something. Like I haven't seen a government who hasn't loved a tax more than this government. So on top of the utility rate hikes we're seeing, on top of the increases in gas and this government's refusal to put a pause on that fuel tax surcharge, on top of all of those things, on top of the increases to groceries, this is a government that also made an announcement of 32 fees and tax increases. So new taxes, increases in taxes — this government loves them all.

Let's go through them again just so that this government can fully realize why it's important to scrap the SaskPower and SaskEnergy rate hike because all of these compound, and they add to a Saskatchewan family's burden. Not even included in this, Madam Speaker, is the extra burden families are faced when we have a government who underfunds education, Madam Speaker.

[11:45]

And what we saw as a result of this Sask Party underfunding of education is, for example, the recent addition for many school divisions of having to charge parents an extra fee if their child was going to stay over the lunch hour. So for kids to be able to eat their lunches at school, now parents have to pay an extra fee

for that. So that again is another Sask Party fee increase on families.

Not only that, but they also . . . Like I said, the list of 32 fees and tax increases that I wanted to list include the agriculture property tax, the residential property tax, the commercial and industrial property tax, the resource property tax, the tobacco tax, the vape products tax. And then they added PST on you name it, Madam Speaker: PST on sporting events, PST on concerts, PST on shows, PST on movie theatres, PST on museums, PST on zoos — I know members opposite love to visit and chat about dinosaurs, so I'm sure they're really feeling the burden on those particular two — PST on historical sites, PST on fairs, PST on rodeos, PST on trade shows, PST on arts and craft shows, PST on conferences, PST on seminars, PST on professional theatre tickets.

I'm not done, Madam Speaker. There's 32; there's quite a few. Oh, sorry. There's 31 now, oh, because the Sask Party government wants to applaud themselves for announcing that they're going put a PST on gym memberships and then deciding that maybe that wasn't the smartest decision to ever make, Madam Speaker, after listening to the flurry of people across the province talking about what an illogical decision that was, Madam Speaker.

But more fees and tax increases that this government still decided to put on Saskatchewan families also include — because I'm not done the list, Madam Speaker — PST on golf memberships, PST on curling fees, PST on hunting guides, PST on fishing guides. There is an increase to hunting licence fees, an increase to fishing licence fees, and like we said, an increase to SaskPower rates. There's an increase to Crown land rental rate for outfitters, ecotourism operators, and access roads; increase to gravel permit fees; increase to cottage land-lease fees; and an increase to — can you believe it, Madam Speaker — cannabis store fees, Madam Speaker. Seriously, this government is so out of touch with Saskatchewan people it's absolutely ridiculous.

And it shows, it shows in what we're seeing happen in the province right now. It shows in the level of out-migration from this province, a province which we all very much love and wish this government did a better job of selling the good-news story instead of being internationally shamed for the decisions that they make, Madam Speaker. What we're seeing is we're the ninth, the ninth, the second-worst in the country in terms of out-migration numbers, Madam Speaker. We had 10,000 young people leave under this Premier's watch, Madam Speaker.

We've seen median household incomes flatline in Saskatchewan under this Premier's watch, Madam Speaker. Weekly earnings have not recovered from what was a high in May 2020 under this Premier's watch, Madam Speaker. In the last two years Canadians are making more, yet Saskatchewan people are making less, Madam Speaker.

And on top of all of those things, Madam Speaker, we're seeing this Sask Party decision to increase utility fees, Madam Speaker. Of course these are very important Crowns. These are Crowns that . . . My dad, for example, he worked for Power for 35 years. They're Crowns that I think a lot of us hold near and dear to our heart.

We understand the importance of those Crowns, at least on this side of the House. We know members on that side of the House tried very, very, very, very hard to sell and privatize those Crowns, and to the point of where they tried to change the definition of privatization, Madam Speaker. We on this side of the House understand the value of those Crowns, understand the value of protecting those Crowns and maintaining the strength of those Crowns and what that means to Saskatchewan jobs and maintaining affordable utility bundles for the people of this province, Madam Speaker.

What we've seen time and time again is this government pull from the equity in these Crowns to beef up the GRF [General Revenue Fund], Madam Speaker, rather than reinvesting in infrastructure, in much-needed infrastructure. And as a result now we're seeing the bill come to Saskatchewan people in terms of these utility hikes.

Madam Speaker, it's a real shame. We've called for some, like I said, several productive options throughout the last several months of ways that Saskatchewan families could be helped by this Sask Party government. What do we see instead? Nothing but bluster. Nothing but more fees and tax hikes. Five-hundred-dollar cheques that go to everybody but don't account for the fact that, you know, children are expensive, Madam Speaker.

I hope that members opposite think about this motion and decide to vote for it, because I think it's a great one, and I thank my colleague for moving it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Lambert): — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to stand and weigh in on this. Before I get started, I just want to take a moment. The weather outside is getting much, much colder. The roads are getting more difficult to pass. And I want to thank our workers at SaskEnergy and SaskPower for helping keep the lights on and keep our houses warm all throughout the winter. They do such a great job and I just want to throw a shout-out to them because they are doing difficult work, sometimes in blizzards, out there days at a time as we saw in the Southwest a year ago to get the power back on to people. So thank you so much to all our Crown workers and the great job that they do.

As the members opposite know, the Crowns need to be viable on their own. They need to continue to be able to run without . . . like a business, Mr. Speaker. So a couple of facts that we'll put on the record here. SaskPower has not increased their rates since 2018, Mr. Speaker. That's four years. And now SaskPower is going through a bit of a transition given some of the federal overreach into power production in our province. They are having to look to the future as we look to transition from coal into alternative means of power generation in our province. That takes investment, Mr. Speaker. And it seems as though the members opposite just want to keep everything stagnant and have no plan for the future on how we're going to turn our lights on in this province actually. But it does take an investment and it does take money, Mr. Speaker.

The rate of natural gas, the world commodity, has tripled over the last two years. And as the members opposite would know,

much of our electricity is generated by natural gas power. Much of our home heating comes from natural gas. Put on top of that a federal carbon tax, which is costing SaskPower and SaskEnergy millions and hundreds of million dollars a year, and there are few options available for these Crowns to stay viable other than to have to, unfortunately from time to time, increase the rates as the world dictates.

So there's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that inflation is causing some challenges, not only here in Saskatchewan, in Canada, but around the world. But the department of hypocrisy across the way there, which is the only thing they seem to get right, stands up and votes in favour of our affordability bill, but then turns around and slams it right afterwards. Mr. Speaker, are they with it or are they against it? I can never figure out which side of the aisle that they are actually standing on.

And let's just go over what those affordability measures were for the people of this province. Due to the, yes, good position that our accounting has come into because of the resource revenues, the resources that are owned by the people of this province, our government was able to extend the small-business tax reduction at zero per cent for another year. We were able to pay down a billion dollars of debt, saving over \$50 million a year. And of course the \$500 affordability tax credit cheque, which doesn't seem to be good enough for the members opposite . . . And I'll get to that in a second, but lest we forget all the other measures that are out there that this government has continued to do year over year.

Just a couple of years ago in our campaign, to have the good fortune to be re-elected as the government in this province, we reduced the power bills for everybody across this province by 10 per cent for a year. We've taken 110,000 people off the provincial income tax roll in our time in office, so a family of four pays no income tax on their first \$53,000. Under the NDP they were paying it at half that at \$26,000.

Now my favourite one, Mr. Speaker, is the removal of the gas tax. Again the department of hypocrisy across the way, they won't call their buddies Justin and Jagmeet in Ottawa to get rid of the carbon tax or to ask them about the fuel excise tax or the GST [goods and services tax] that goes on it. No, that 15 cents, Mr. Speaker, every penny of it and more goes back into the improvements and the upgrades of the highways in this province, over 10 000 kilometres over 10 years that we are investing in this province. That's more passing lanes. That's better roads.

Do they want to go back to the time when they invested zero into our highways and in fact had people going out there and telling them to go fill their own potholes, Mr. Speaker? Is that what they want to go back to? This government will continue to invest into that, over \$63 million this year alone in northern highways and airports, Mr. Speaker. Our government is committed to making this province more affordable for people while investing in those services for those people.

They also want to raise the royalty rate on resource companies by 1 per cent to help pay for all this. Well that's really going to inspire growth in our province, isn't it, Mr. Speaker. We know what happens when they start implementing their policies and raising taxes on corporations, Mr. Speaker. Those corporations can't get out of our province fast enough.

They want to talk about net migration out of our province. They should maybe look at their own record, Mr. Speaker. Less than a million people lived here when they were in power. We're going to hit 1.2 million people in this province by the end of this calendar year. And we're seeing record investment coming into this province, over \$15 billion in the last year alone.

Now I know they want to talk about learning math these days, Mr. Speaker. Let's do a little bit of math. When they had the chance to make an amendment to this bill, Bill 89, last night, Mr. Speaker, nothing. Crickets. In fact they stood up in the House today and they supported the bill. Yet they want to go on about kids not being cut in or receive part of the affordability tax credit cheques. Well here's the math. A single mom of three receives \$500 from the Saskatchewan Party government under our plan. However under their plan that same household of four people would get \$420. Now I don't have to be a calculus major here, Mr. Speaker, to figure out that that is less than what our government just passed here today.

So, Mr. Speaker, inflation is here and it is going to be here for a little while. And we all understand that, and our government is working hard to make life more affordable in this province. But it's not just in the short term, Mr. Speaker. We're looking to make life more affordable for people in this province for the long term. And that is why Bill 88 is before this Assembly right now, *The Saskatchewan First Act*. The Saskatchewan-first bill puts the people of this province first, including the exclusive provincial legislative jurisdiction over several areas.

And I'll quote from part 1, section 3, clause 3(d): "the operations of sites and facilities in Saskatchewan for the generation and production of electrical . . . [power]." Now our power in this province is facing an ever-escalating tax put in by the federal Liberals and their counterparts and their buddies, the NDP. They're going to triple that carbon tax. Now they want to talk about lowering rates in SaskEnergy and SaskPower. What is that carbon tax doing to those, bottom line? Hundreds of millions of dollars.

They're phasing out coal. They want to phase out natural gas by 2035. The CEO [chief executive officer] of SaskPower has said hitting the federal government's proposed target of being net zero by 2035 is simply "not possible." Remember, the original target was 2050. Are we really going to stand by and not draw the line, Mr. Speaker, to protect the power energy production in our province? Are we really not going to have a plan to turn the lights on? What do we do, Mr. Speaker?

So I'm curious why the members opposite won't support this bill, why they won't stand up and put the people of Saskatchewan first. They keep saying things like, the member from Elphinstone said, ". . . this is a bill that asserts nothing" and ". . . it contains nothing to help the people of Saskatchewan." Mr. Speaker, we are working to make sure that the people of Saskatchewan can turn the lights on, can heat their homes. We're working to make sure that the federal overreach that's coming into this province stops. Our government is supporting people in this province today, tomorrow, and every day, Mr. Speaker.

[12:00]

And I would hope that the members opposite, the NDP, would

stand up for those people of Saskatchewan instead of standing behind Justin and Jagmeet in Ottawa. We've a lot to be proud of in this province, Mr. Speaker. We've got record population. We've got record investment. We have a lot of things that our people around the world are coming to see, to invest in, and to live here and to raise their kids here and to educate their kids here. This is an exciting time for our province, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to the members opposite taking some serious consideration to who they stand with. Do they put the people of Saskatchewan first, or do they put their friends in Ottawa first, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to voting on *The Saskatchewan First Act*?

Mr. Speaker, I do support our government's affordability actions. I support the fine workers at our Crowns. But, Mr. Speaker, what I won't do is support this motion that could potentially cripple the future of energy in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Teed: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure and a privilege always to stand in this House, and to wade into my first 75-minute debate. It's great to hear from the members opposite, like, opposed to making life more affordable for Saskatchewan folks during a generational affordability crisis, because that's all I've really heard from those speeches.

So yes, thanks again for having me to debate this motion in the Assembly. We are calling for the government to cancel its plans to increase SaskPower and SaskEnergy rates during this affordability crisis. We're urging the government to use the massive amounts of windfall revenues that they've found in the last couple of months to give some real relief to the people of Saskatchewan. Cancel those rate hikes before the cold Saskatchewan winters set in. We're urging them to consider because with every tax increase and rate increase, the budget of Saskatchewan people gets tighter and tighter and tighter.

Mr. Speaker, this summer I had the immense privilege of speaking with so many constituents, knocking doors in the recent by-election. Had a chance to hear their hopes, their dreams, their concerns. I knocked every door, Mr. Speaker, with a genuine interest of wanting to hear what was on people's minds, what kept them up at night. Regardless of the political party they supported, I wanted to hear what was important to them.

And you know, from so many folks I heard concerns about our health care system: worries about the ER, health care workers feeling disrespected, women forced to deliver their babies on the highway because of rural closures. I think my colleagues like to call that the Kamsack shuffle. And some folks told me about their worries about underfunding in our education system. You know, they were seeing oversized classrooms — 30-plus kids — and EAs [educational assistant] disappearing.

Mr. Speaker, we're living through a generational affordability crisis. And what came up on almost every door was that people were concerned about the rising costs of absolutely everything. They were struggling to make ends meet. Families with kids have seen bills continue to climb. I know my colleague mentioned the hundreds of dollars now that families have to pay for their child to eat lunch in schools.

And, Mr. Speaker, families are seeing their budgets become tighter and tighter with every hike. Seniors told me that seniors living in Saskatchewan housing authority buildings were seeing rent increases, and alongside power increases they were finding it harder and harder to make ends meet as this government continues to tax almost everything.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's not even to talk about the folks who are living on social assistance that are also seeing their costs climb with little to no additional supports coming from this government. Payments under this disastrous SIS [Saskatchewan income support] and SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program barely keep people out of poverty. Affordability has topped the list of concerns for so many folks.

It's also just hitting low-income folks the hardest. You know, this government is telling folks to dig into their savings, whatever savings they might have. With these tax increases they're saying to folks, dig into those savings. And for folks without savings, start going into high-interest debt. Follow our lead.

And no one in this province, a province as wealthy as ours, should have to struggle to have their basic needs met, should have to struggle to buy groceries, or should have to go into debt to buy those groceries. In the face of an affordability crisis when folks are looking to their government for action, they're seeing a provincial government continue to just raise taxes — 31 tax fees and hikes in the most recent budget. And, Mr. Speaker, my colleague already went through this lengthy list of tax increases, almost too long to read, and I won't get into it again. But we can see that this government has decided to tax almost everything.

Mr. Speaker, folks are watching this government's inaction on affordability. They saw a government that paraded a separatist around Saskatchewan, spending who knows how much on closed-door meetings. What people on the doorstep were even more incensed about was this government's attempt to buy the recent by-election.

I'll give this government a lot of credit for being so good at knowing just when to announce a fiscal update and when to announce affordability measures that our party had been calling for, for months. After a budget that had raised taxes, we suddenly had a summer fiscal update with, lo and behold, 2 billion in extra dollars. Surprise. Look how good we're managing the economy. This summer announcement, we finally heard the government break its silence on affordability relief and announce that they were mailing \$500 cheques to every person over 18 who had filed their taxes. Such great timing, right before a summer by-election.

And people were shocked. They saw through it instantly. And I heard it on the doorstep; I heard the upset. They told me that there were so many better uses for \$450 million: health care, education, homelessness. I even had a great conversation with one of this government's supporters. On election day I was walking down the street, and I saw a man with a voter card in his hand. And I said hello and wished him well as he went to his advance voting returning office. And he turned to me and he said, Nathaniel, I'm voting for you in this election. I have voted for the Sask Party in every previous election, but I am so mad about these \$500 cheques. He said to me, I have no idea how you guys would have spent this money, but you would have spent it better. I shook his hand and I promised him that we would have spent it

better, and I was thankful for his vote. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? It was a conversation I had with so, so many former supporters of this government.

So on one hand the government raises taxes, and on the other hand it gives affluent people \$500 cheques — an affordability band-aid. And, Mr. Speaker, I say affluent because of course the most vulnerable people in our province will not be receiving these dollars, folks who are homeless or living month to month and haven't had extra money to pool together to pay to have their taxes done, Mr. Speaker. Folks who really need it won't get it.

And then there's folks like me, folks with no kids. My family will get \$1,000. Single mothers with multiple children, one cheque. How is that fair, Mr. Speaker? This is the . . . I hear about the donations. I will be donating my affordability cheque, Mr. Speaker. I will be. The wealthiest in our province will get \$500, and the vulnerable will be left out in the cold.

And by the end of the by-election, the government's bribe wasn't enough to win this seat. People saw through it, Mr. Speaker. And you know what? The cherry on top of all that heading into winter: power rate hikes. Another slap in the face to everyone struggling to make do at the end of the month.

This government tells people to budget better while they take trade missions to Europe to the tune of thousands of dollars. Mr. Speaker, I'll say it again: the people of Sask are watching. Mr. Speaker, I've had the pleasure of representing the people of Saskatoon Meewasin as a former educator, a fundraiser, but also as a small-business owner. And for small-business owners across our province, hikes to rates are just one of another blow of onslaught of costs that will make it increasingly hard to do business in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite will say they have extended a zero per cent small-business tax. But as I've said before, with one hand the government gives, and the other, it takes away. As someone who's owned and operated a small business for almost 10 years, I am honoured to voice the concerns of small-business owners in our province. As a small-business owner you get into this work because it's something that you love. You have a dream of offering something new to our province and make it a better place to live for the folks. You dream of offering, you know, opening a retail store or a brew pub or etc., and you stick with it.

Oh, I'm hitting the end. Mr. Speaker, I've prepared so much for my first 75-minute debate. I'm nearly at the end here. Mr. Speaker, supply chain issues are just . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Your time is expired. I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise in the House today to debate the opposition's motion. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan currently has the second-lowest utility bundle in Canada. SaskPower and SaskEnergy continue to provide safe, reliable energy and services at rates among the most affordable in the country.

Providing safe and reliable energy to the people and businesses of Saskatchewan does not happen by accident. Delivering power takes in-depth planning, coordination, and implementation to get

the power that the people of Saskatchewan expect and deserve. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would ask all members to thank the hard-working individuals who work around the clock to keep the lights on in our homes and comfortable throughout the year, especially when temperatures plummet. Thank you to all of them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our province is growing in population and private investment, and contributing to a growing economy. In the second quarter of this year, Saskatchewan had a population increase never before experienced in our history. More people are now calling Saskatchewan home than ever before. To support our population growth, our government has invested \$6.44 billion in health care, including 12.5 million for 11 new ICU [intensive care unit] beds and 470 million for targeted mental health and addictions initiatives. That's growth that works for everyone.

Our government has a record investment of 2.9 billion in education, including 20 million to support increased costs for school divisions, such as fuel and insurance. With final student enrolment numbers for the 2022-23 school year having an increase of 3,840 students, the Ministry of Education added \$15.5 million. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is growth that works for everyone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan is the place to be. It is the place to live, work, play, and invest. We grow, produce, and mine products that the world needs. We have the food, fuel, and fertilizer. Several companies are investing in Saskatchewan, including the most significant single investment in history. BHP is investing \$12 billion in a new potash mine near Jansen; value-added agricultural investments by Cargill, Viterra, Co-op, and AGT Foods constructing and operating canola crushing facilities in Saskatchewan. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is growth that works for everyone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, record growth in Saskatchewan creates demands on our utilities. Saskatchewan's Crown utilities are there to provide safe, reliable energy for our growing province. Our Crown utilities have invested \$1.8 billion in capital projects to meet these demands. SaskEnergy's \$272 million investment meets customer demands and maintains the integrity of the natural gas system, a needed investment to keep businesses supplied and homes heated.

[12:15]

SaskPower will invest over a billion dollars to build new generation and customer connections including a gas-fired power plant near Moose Jaw, solar wind projects coming online, and exploring the options of small modular reactors with a decision to be made by the end of 2029. Mr. Deputy Speaker, private investment will continue to create additional energy demands. SaskPower and SaskEnergy have invested in meeting these demands and keeping Saskatchewan growing. While the Crown utilities are making these investments and providing energy to the people of Saskatchewan, they are doing it with one of the lowest costs to consumers anywhere in the country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP opposition members continue to support their federal leader's stance on the ever-increasing carbon tax. The carbon tax will increase until we reach 2030, which will top out at \$170 per tonne. Or will this be the top?

We've heard this fairy tale before from the lethargic duo of Justin and Jagmeet. In 2031 will they decide that \$170 is not nearly enough?

The sole purpose of the federal carbon tax is to make fuel and energy unaffordable for the average citizen, forcing them to choose between heating their home or feeding their family. Legally, SaskPower and SaskEnergy must remit the federal carbon tax collected from their customers, including the GST charged on the carbon tax. That's correct, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a tax on a tax. Not to worry though, the federal government informed us that every carbon tax dollar sent to Ottawa gets back to the province it was paid from, less the GST of course. They have sent a carbon tax rebate to some people, however, most of the carbon tax money remains in the hands of the federal government. By the end of this year, SaskPower will have paid an estimated \$480 million in carbon tax to Justin and Jagmeet. Saskatchewan has yet to receive a return.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, will the opposition members be open and honest with the Saskatchewan people? Will they tell the province's people they support the Justin-Jagmeet carbon tax? Will they admit that the carbon tax is driving up inflation? Will they call their federal leader and denounce the federal carbon tax? A better question might be, will Jagmeet take their call? Will Jagmeet take their call? Perhaps, perhaps — and just a suggestion — maybe they shouldn't have invited him to their convention and then had to uninvite him.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have asked the federal government to pause the increases to the carbon tax to help control the high cost of living. They declined. I have stated before, the carbon tax is a tax on everything. With annual carbon tax increases, fuel and energy prices will continue to rise and the people of Saskatchewan will pay more. When will the opposition members take a stand against Justin and Jagmeet, take a stand against the carbon tax, and support *The Saskatchewan First Act*?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the provincial government has been making life more affordable in Saskatchewan. In 2021, a 10 per cent rebate on everyone's power bill, a refund that the member from Regina University called bad public policy — and I quoted that — bad public policy. SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] provided two separate rebates, nearly \$500 per registered vehicle. A tax-free \$500 affordability tax credit to all adults 18 years and older who have filed a 2021 tax return. We extended the small-business zero per cent tax rate for an additional year, zero per cent until June 2023. SaskEnergy has provided \$7.5 million in residential and commercial rebates since 2019. And their tune-up assistance program has assisted low-income homeowners with free furnace maintenance. Since 2012, five Crown corporations have provided over \$20 million to STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service], ensuring emergency services are available throughout the province. Your government and Crown corporations are investing back into the province and the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Or, sorry. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is growth that works for everyone.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, supporting the opposition's motion is a disservice to Saskatchewan, its people, and our abundant resources. I will not be supporting the motion. Thank you.

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — What's your point of order?

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Meewasin stated that our government is buying votes and taking bribes. Mr. Speaker, this is obviously unparliamentary language. The member should stand in his place and apologize.

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

Mr. Teed: — I withdraw and apologize.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — What's your point of order?

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, during the member for Walsh Acres' remarks, he called the opposition "the department of hypocrisy." The member should well know that that is also unparliamentary language. We'd ask him to apologize.

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

Mr. Meyers: — I also withdraw and apologize.

The Deputy Speaker: — The time for the 65-minute debate period has ended. The 10-minute question period will now begin. I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The NDP have absolutely no credibility when it comes to affordability as long as they stand with their leaders, Jagmeet and Justin, who plan to triple the carbon tax. They're intentionally driving up prices on everything, including gas, home heating, groceries, even lumber. These members opposite refuse to condemn the carbon tax and the toll it's taking on the people of this province.

To the member from Saskatoon Meewasin, will you commit to working with this government to pass *The Saskatchewan First Act* unanimously and stand up against the federal government?

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to have about 10 more minutes so I can finish my speech because I actually . . . This answer was in there somewhere. Mr. Speaker, NDP governments, for as long as NDP governments have been in power, have supported Saskatchewan and have been crucial at securing Saskatchewan's rights to its natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that is sitting on windfall revenues in a province as wealthy as ours. There should never be families with children going hungry, Mr. Speaker. That's the real

answer.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the member from Regina Walsh Acres please explain how raising energy rates by 23 per cent when families are facing an affordability crisis makes any sense, and particularly for the members of his constituency?

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

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I had mentioned in my speech earlier on, it has been a number of years since SaskEnergy has raised any rates. The commodity price for natural gas in the world, Mr. Speaker, has tripled in the last two years. Put on top of that an NDP-supported carbon tax which is costing SaskEnergy, SaskPower, and the people of this province hundreds of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker.

The real question here is, when are they going to stand up to the federal government and their counterparts, Justin and Jagmeet, and cancel the carbon tax which is costing the people of Walsh Acres and Saskatchewan hundreds of millions of dollars?

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

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On September 13th, that 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, Mr. Speaker, and we are going to continue our track record of keeping Saskatchewan affordable.

If the NDP are truly concerned about the energy affordability in Saskatchewan, they would call up their federal leaders, Justin and Jagmeet, and pressure them to remove the carbon tax. But every time we stand up to the fed it is nothing to be proud of.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the member from Saskatoon Meewasin, do you agree that Liberal-NDP-enforced carbon tax is directly affecting affordability in this province, and will you commit to oppose the carbon tax? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Teed: — Mr. Speaker, I think it’s interesting to note that carbon taxes were literally invented by friends of the Sask Party, the right wing libertarian folks in the United States that they look up to so much, as the only option for conservative governments to make any movement on the climate crisis. Mr. Speaker, if this government is on a first-name basis with Justin and Jagmeet, why not get to the table and make a better deal?

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now families might be better able to pay these sky-high utility bills if the Sask Party hadn’t shut kids out from the \$500 affordability cheques. Does the member for Regina Walsh Acres really think that it’s

fair that the Sask Party chose not to help families with kids?

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

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to thank the member from Douglas Park for the question. The member from Douglas Park — married, with two kids — is going to receive \$1,000 in the affordability tax credit. Under their plan, Mr. Speaker, that family would receive \$420. Now that is 580 . . . My family is going to receive \$1,000.

Every single person over 18 that files income tax in this province, Mr. Speaker, is going to get a \$500 tax affordability cheque. A mother, a single mother or a single father, a parent of three, is going to get \$500. Under their plan, they would have received \$420. Mr. Speaker, we are sticking up for the people of this province and making it more affordable for the people of Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When it comes to affordability, Saskatchewan is a leader in Canada. We have the second-lowest-cost utility bundle in the country, largely driven by the lowest auto insurance rates and the lowest natural gas commodity cost in the country. Even the provincial leader of the NDP broke ranks and agreed with us when she said, and I quote, “In an affordability crisis, we have some of the best rates as a province.”

To the member of Saskatoon Meewasin, do you agree with your provincial leader and recognize that this is one of the most affordable provinces in Canada under this government, or is there still nothing to be proud of?

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

Mr. Teed: — Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to live in Saskatchewan, hence why I ran to represent the great people of Saskatoon Meewasin. Mr. Speaker, those comments were made because we did have the most affordable-rate utility. And then this government raised them. It’s going to cost an average family an extra \$150 a year, Mr. Speaker. That’s money that most folks, most vulnerable folks do not have in their budgets. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Setting aside the nonsense and the damage that will be caused by hiking power and energy bills right now by this government, how does the member for Walsh Acres justify hiking taxes during an affordability crisis and voting against providing fuel tax relief in this province?

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

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well that member has been in opposition long enough to know that this government

invests in the roads in our province. We don't ask people to go fill their own potholes. Fifteen cents of every litre that goes directly into the upgrade and improvement of our highways, including passing lanes which are making our roads safer, which includes \$60 million into northern highways and airports, Mr. Speaker.

[12:30]

We are going to continue to invest in the people of this province. If they really want to talk about taking something off the gas, maybe they should talk about taking the carbon tax off from their buddies down in Ottawa.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members opposite want to talk about our record on travel expenses, however they seem to neglect their own expenses during their time in government. In their final year of government the NDP spent not 500,000, not 600,000, not 700,000, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but \$978,000. Their own executive air budget in 2006 and 2007 was \$4.1 million. This is during a time when Saskatchewan wasn't establishing any international trade partners or growing export.

To the member from Saskatoon Meewasin: how can you justify the last NDP government spending millions of dollars of travel expenses without trade missions and still believe your record has credibility on affordability?

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I honestly think it's time for this government to run on their own 14-year record. We have a Finance minister taking an \$8,000 flight for a lunch, Mr. Speaker. Boy, I would love an \$8,000 lunch, and I'm sure some of the folks, the seniors I spoke to in the Saskatchewan housing authority buildings who can't afford groceries right now because their rents are going up and the cost of absolutely everything is going up . . . Mr. Speaker, these people are out of touch.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres or — pardon me — Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Some day, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Yeah, some day. Now my question goes . . .

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

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

Motion No. 1 — Saskatchewan-First Policies and Legislation

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will be putting forward a motion at the end of my comments today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, leadership matters. Leadership is important in guiding, providing support and services where and when needed, opening doors to opportunity and growth for both individuals and the collective good, acknowledging mistakes and correcting if necessary, all for the benefit of others. I am proud of the leadership of our Premier and all the members on this side of the House.

Let's talk about leadership and what is needed to stop the economic harm being imposed upon the people of Saskatchewan, and more importantly by whom. To help us understand how we got to this point — and the need now to demand that the NDP opposition in this Assembly back away from their federal leader, Jagmeet — let's recall the rhetoric from a federal NDP leader that the NDP opposition in this House supported and continues to support.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members opposite continue to stand behind a federal leader whose platform includes, and I quote:

Ending oil and gas company subsidies means we can invest in renewable energy and get Canada powered by net carbon-free electricity by 2030. We will fulfill Canada's G20 commitment to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies and redirect these funds to low-carbon initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, those subsidies wouldn't amount to a hill of beans compared to billions of dollars in revenues and taxes we would receive as a province and as a country if our own oil was able to get to tidewater and be sold to global markets at a fair price.

Opposition members in this House stood behind federal candidates in the last federal election whose platforms also supported no more pipelines and to leave the oil in the ground. The new Leader of the Opposition and member from Regina Lakeview, and the member from Saskatoon Fairview, volunteered and supported the Saskatoon West candidate who wholeheartedly supported Jagmeet Singh's no-pipelines-at-all-or-ever-again stance.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP opposition supports a carbon tax in this province, a carbon tax that a federal parliamentary budget officer found has left at least 60 per cent of Canadian households financially burdened. This same report also stated that Saskatchewan producers will be paying \$28 million a year in carbon tax for grain drying alone by 2030.

The new federal fuel standard, which came into force in June and will take effect next year, will have a \$7 million-a-year impact on both gas consumption and diesel consumption. The opposition also supports this new tax. This is a huge impact not only on the agriculture industry in the province but affects retail, rail, trucking, manufacturing, and of course heating our homes and fuelling our vehicles.

The federal clean electricity regulations — no fossil-fuel-generated power by 2035 — wow. Literally impossible in this province, but once again supported by members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we will continue to promote our traditional oil and gas and mining sectors, and we welcome new technologies and all energy forms. That allows for growth that works for everyone. We support investment, job

creation, and innovation in both new and existing sectors that keep us warm, safe, and secure while at the same time lowering our emission levels.

As our Minister of Justice and Attorney General stated in her reply to the Speech from the Throne, economic success and strength just don't happen by accident. They happen when you have strong leadership; you pound the pavement around the world telling your investment story; when you create a pro-business and pro-investment climate; when you don't turn your back on the oil and gas sector, the mining sector, the forestry sector; and when you open the door to new ones like lithium, hydrogen, and helium.

The work that has been done by our Premier and our Minister of Trade and Export in meeting with and engaging with leaders from other countries throughout the past year, and our new trade offices throughout the globe have assured us of the global interest in partnering and working with Saskatchewan to get the food, fuel, and fertilizer they need. That is leadership.

Saskatchewan's economic success has been achieved despite federal imposition. We have industries who have made significant investments in this province creating jobs and revenues that will contribute to the economic growth of Saskatchewan, revenues that will support and fund health care, education, social services, a good transportation system for our goods to get across the country and the world.

We just need the Trudeau-Singh coalition to stop imposing policies and regulations that create more economic harm to all our industries and businesses, big and small. They need to honour the constitutional authority given Saskatchewan within the Constitution to manage our own natural resources. The Trudeau-Singh coalition government needs to get out of the way.

Mr. Speaker, when Jagmeet Singh was made leader of the NDP, the member from Regina Douglas Park was jumping up and down in here heralding Singh's victory, stating, and I quote:

It is an exciting moment for the federal NDP caucus and New Democrats across Canada. He's going to bring many years of experience fighting inequality to the issues that matter to Canadians.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where's his fight for equality when it comes to supporting the thousands of jobs created by our resource industries in this province?

The Trudeau-Singh imposition of its carbon tax; clean fuel standard tax; Bill C-69, the no-more-pipelines bill; the clean electricity standard tax; and the fertilizer emissions cap are creating irreparable harm to the industries in our resource sector who want to grow and prosper in this province and provide well-paying jobs and opportunities for families to be able to afford to feed their families and pay their bills.

Saskatchewan produces some of the most sustainable, environmentally conscious oil and natural gas in the world, and the new technologies have allowed industry to progress substantially. But we need a Trudeau-Singh coalition to get educated and understand this. Mr. Singh's dream of ending oil and gas production in this province and country is a pipe dream.

We can just look to Germany and other European countries whose leaders failed to look into the future and acknowledge the need for oil and gas as part of their energy needs and now are leaving their own citizens in a very, very grim predicament on how to survive this winter. Mr. Singh's no-pipeline-on-my-watch stance still holds. And by continuing to hold memberships in the federal NDP, we know the NDP opposition in this Assembly backs Mr. Singh's stance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Jagmeet Singh has even suggested that he may allow provinces a veto on pipelines. He acknowledges the federal government has clear constitutional authority to approve interprovincial projects. But, and I quote, "I believe that the federal government has significant constitutional powers, but I don't think it's effective to impose pipelines in communities. It's not the way to go." Excuse me? I guess that means Jagmeet is willing to give one province a veto: Quebec.

Well guess what? Saskatchewan wants exactly what Quebec gets, and that is why we introduced *The Saskatchewan First Act*, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to clarify the constitutional authority already afforded this province on managing our own natural resources. But for the love of me and the people of Saskatchewan, I — we — on this side of the House cannot understand why the NDP opposition does not support the people of Saskatchewan on Bill 88 and continues to stand behind their federal leader, Jagmeet Singh, and his propping up of the Trudeau government, who wants to cause irreparable harm to Saskatchewan's economic future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, unequivocal, exclusive provincial jurisdiction over natural resources was enshrined in the Canadian Constitution in 1867 and again in 1930, which also granted the provinces sole control over the exploration, development, and management of mineral and forestry resources, property and civil rights, and over all matters of a local nature. Provincial powers are defined in section 92 of the 1867 *Constitution Act* and in the 1982 *Trudeau Constitution*. But it appears now the Trudeau-Singh coalition has created their own 2022 constitution that wants to decimate those provincial constitutional powers and kill the West.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are amending Saskatchewan's constitution through section 45 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, which provides that a provincial legislature can unilaterally amend its own constitution. And why not? Quebec did it and the Trudeau-Singh coalition government said it was within the powers of provinces to do so. None of this would be necessary if the Trudeau-Singh government had proper respect for Western Canadian interests and rights.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our natural resources are one of the major reasons Saskatchewan can and is going to weather the economic and recessionary storm that may be experienced elsewhere. The people of Saskatchewan know and understand the importance of economic growth and that the imposition of the Trudeau-Singh coalition policies and regulations are causing significant economic harm to this province. They are tired of the condescension and contempt and double standards being applied to Saskatchewan. As our Minister of Justice has said in this House, it is not unpatriotic to ask for a fair deal and to ask that the federal government be an honourable partner.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government will stand up for the people of Saskatchewan. We will push to exercise the constitutional authority over our own natural resources and economic future in this province. It is time to draw the line and assert our constitutional rights.

Every member on that side of the House voted against the Speech from the Throne, a speech that showed leadership, offered supports and services for their constituents, offered job opportunities, provided more protection and safety, offered direction and hope for better health care, more funding for education, social services, the arts and entertainment, and so much more.

[12:45]

But it's obvious the NDP members do not want any of that for constituents. They voted against it. The members opposite say they support the resource sector, but only one NDP member showed up to an event hosted here in this building just a couple of evenings ago by the resource sector. This is a clear message by the opposition that they still stand behind their federal leader and his coalition with the Trudeau Liberal government on not supporting the resource sector in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, *The Saskatchewan First Act* will not only clarify and assert our rightful authority over our natural resources, but it will include control over our own immigration and collection of corporate income tax. A hundred per cent of that money belongs to the people of Saskatchewan, and we shouldn't have to wait for the Trudeau-Singh coalition to decide how much of it to give back.

We show leadership on this side and decide who and how many come to live in Saskatchewan from abroad. We decide how to spend the money invested by industry and businesses in this province. Our leadership on this side of the House knows that is what the people of Saskatchewan want.

From what we've heard so far in the opposition's reply to Bill 88, they don't want to support it either for their constituents. The opposition needs to start singing out of the same songbook as the people of Saskatchewan and denounce their federal leader, Jagmeet Singh, who is backstopping a Trudeau Liberal government that wants to freeze out Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when this motion comes to a vote I am certain the members opposite will certainly show their true colours. We already know some things: "There's nothing here to be proud of." But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we completely disagree. We are proud of this province, its people, and the resources we produce, and it's time the NDP did and said the same.

So I will put forward the motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

That this Assembly supports the Government of Saskatchewan's implementation of Saskatchewan-first policies and legislation, and that we demand the Trudeau-Singh coalition Government of Canada end policies that would constitute an attack on Saskatchewan and Canada's economic growth and energy production, including but not limited to the federal carbon tax, the clean fuel standard, Bill C-69, and the clean electricity standard, and the fertilizer

emissions cap.

I, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will adjourn debate on this motion. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Lloydminster:

That this Assembly supports the Government of Saskatchewan implementation of Saskatchewan-first policies and legislation, and that we demand the Trudeau-Singh coalition Government of Canada end policies that would constitute an attack on Saskatchewan and Canada's economic growth and energy production, including but not limited to the federal carbon tax, the clean fuel standard, Bill C-69, the clean electricity standard, and the fertilizer emissions cap.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The motion having been moved, I will concurrently adjourn debate and the House, move to adjourn the House.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — This House now stands adjourned till 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:50.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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

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Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

Hon. Dustin Duncan
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Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

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