



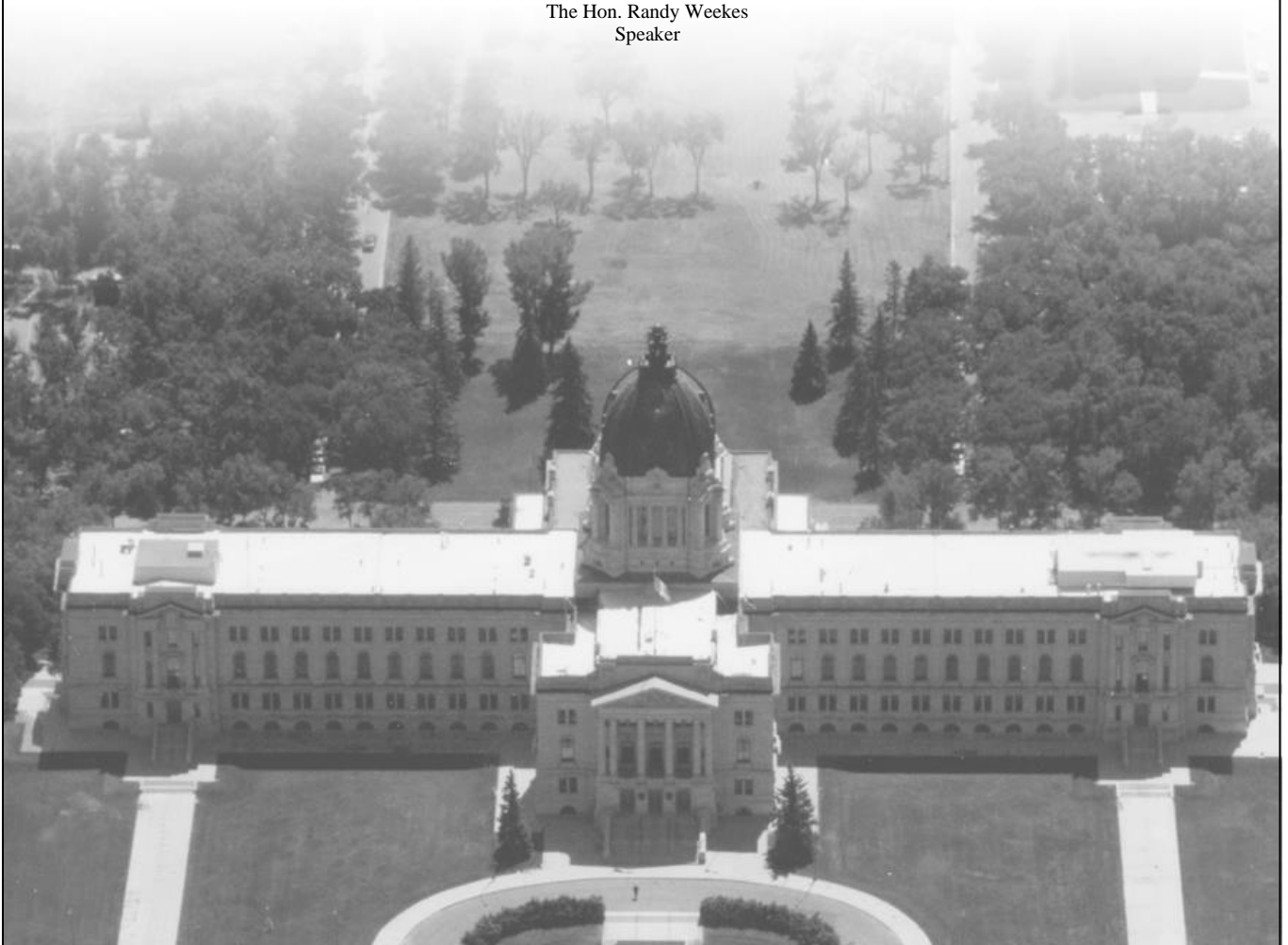
THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

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



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
3rd Session — 29th Legislature

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

Speaker — Hon. Randy Weekes
Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Carla Beck

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

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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

Deputy Clerk — Iris Lang

Principal Clerk — Kathy Buriaynk

Clerk Assistant — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Sean Darling

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Joining us today in the Speaker's gallery is Mike McCabe from the midwestern office of the Council of State Governments, or CSG, in Chicago. Mike is the director of the Midwest office of CSG. His office provides research and staff support services to several groups of state officials, including the Midwestern Legislative Conference, MLC, of which Saskatchewan is now a full member.

Mike has served as, first, policy analyst and assistant director of midwestern office before becoming director. During his tenure at CSG, Mike has provided drafting and consulting assistance in connection with several such agreements, including the Interstate Agriculture Grain Marketing Compact, the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, the Interstate Insurance Receivership Compact, the Interstate Compact on Mental Health, the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact, and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact.

More recently he participated in the development of the Interstate Compact for Adult Offender Supervision, and the Interstate Compact for Juveniles. Mike is also the co-author of *The Evolving Use and the Changing Role of Interstate Compacts: A Practitioner's Guide*, published by the American Bar Association, 2006.

Before joining CSG, Mike worked as an attorney with a private law firm in Des Moines, Iowa. A graduate of Iowa State University, he earned his law degree at the University of Illinois. Mike is visiting the Assembly today. He has already met with the BILLD [Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development] alumni and will be meeting with various groups to discuss the planning of the Midwestern Legislative Conference annual meeting which Saskatchewan is hosting in 2025. Please join me in welcoming Mike to Saskatchewan's Legislative Assembly.

Joining us today in the Speaker's gallery are three members from the Inter-Collegiate-Business Competition debate team from the University of Regina's Hill School of Business: Nehmia Tekeste, Jasmine Bal, and Joshua Cherian. The students are accompanied by their volunteer coach and former member of the Assembly, Tina Beaudry-Mellor. ICBC [Inter-Collegiate Business Competition] is Canada's oldest, most prestigious business-case competition. Students will be heading to Kingston this January to compete. I ask that all members please join me in welcoming this group to the Legislative Assembly.

I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to join with yourself in welcoming Mike McCabe to the legislature. We've seen him all over North America, helping many of us, and I think was very instrumental in establishing BILLD.

Mike, it hasn't been my pleasure to have watched you over the many, many years serving, but for the last few I've been able to see the respect, the high level of respect that you have from all the states and provincial leaders. And we're hoping all the best for you as you retire and you move forwards. We have the opportunity in 2025 to host the MLC and we are hoping that you're able to come and visit and join and help us in those processes. But all the best to you and your family in the future, Mike. Thanks for being here.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join in welcoming Mike McCabe to the Speaker's gallery and to the legislature here today. I had the great honour and privilege of attending the Bowhay Institute this past summer and was treated to the great hospitality that Mike and his staff provided to all of the participants there, and take part in a program that really is unmatched in terms of its calibre and its quality, from the agenda and the list of presenters, and how he was able to provide such an exceptional opportunity for collegial relationship building with legislatures from across the Midwest, and that includes Saskatchewan and Western provinces.

It was a great pleasure to see Michael again today and join in the lunch that we had prior, and reunite and hear about the more recent developments in planning the upcoming Midwest conference that has already been spoken to. And I, just again, want to say how pleased and grateful I am that we have this opportunity to participate with the Bowhay Institute and leadership development program, and ask all members to join me in welcoming Michael McCabe to the legislature here today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to welcome to their legislature, three of my constituents, Leighton and Laya Freitag from Alameda, accompanied by their mother, Sentura. So I'd ask all members to please welcome them to their legislature.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, 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. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is really heartening to see so many people in the galleries today. I think there's a bit of a theme today and that is young people — people, but particularly young people — taking an interest in politics and the decisions that their provincial leaders are making, Mr. Speaker, and it's very heartening to see.

I'd like to first start with welcoming to the east gallery, Mr. Speaker, a group of 37 Spartans. These are grade 12 students who

are attending Sheldon-Williams Collegiate in Regina Lakeview. It is great to see all of you. I look forward to meeting with you afterwards. They're joined today by their teachers, Ms. Deringer and Mr. Holcomb. And I would invite all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member from Cannington in welcoming a very special guest to her Legislative Assembly, Leighton Freitag. As has been mentioned, she's joined by her mom, Sentura, and her sister Laya, Mr. Speaker.

I've been looking forward to Leighton's visit for a very long time. She wrote a really thoughtful letter about funding for education in our province, Mr. Speaker. And it was great to meet with her earlier this morning. She asked a lot of really great questions about education, about politics, about how people choose a particular political party. And I can't tell you how wonderful it was to see someone so interested and thoughtful about the political process.

And, Mr. Speaker, these young people are paying attention. They are not only, as sometimes said, leaders of tomorrow. These are leaders of today. And I invite all members to join me in welcoming these guests to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, it's my privilege to introduce seven guests in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker, from the Hutterite communities across Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to meet with this leadership earlier today; had a great discussion.

Mr. Speaker, we have from the Lehrerleuts, we have Senior Reverend Mike Hofer, Reverend Mike Waldner, and Reverend Joe Kleinsasser. Mr. Speaker, Joe also serves on numerous boards and committees for the Ministry of Agriculture, and I'd like to thank him for all the good work he does on behalf of the agriculture industry.

Mr. Speaker, as well from the Dariusleuts we have Bishop Reverend Joe Wurtz, Reverend David Tschetter, and David Tschetter. Mr. Speaker, again it was great to meet with these folks. I look forward to meeting with them again. And I'd like all members to please give them a warm welcome to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to request leave for 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. To you and through you and to all members, I'd like to recognize a very special group of, I believe, 12 people who are seated in your gallery today. Joining us is the École Massey Climate Change Club who I was lucky enough to receive a letter of advocacy from, oh gosh, it might have been July or August. It was warmer out there, Mr. Speaker.

And this is a group of young people at École Massey in the great city of Regina University who . . . They're not an official school group but they're a group of critically engaged young people who care deeply about nature, care deeply about their environment and the future of their world. And they're here today as part of that engagement. They're doing great grassroots work in the community from bottle drives, raising money, garbage cleanups, as well as clear and direct engagement with political and democratic processes here today.

So joining us are Paige, Lucy, Hailey, Beth, Theodora, Sidney, Elayna, Zobia, and Eirini, as well as their parent chaperones, Nicholas, Stephanie, and Jacqueline, who I understand are, at this point, just desperately trying to keep up with this group of wonderful young people moving so quickly ahead.

It's an absolute pleasure to have them here with us today. We'll be meeting after question period and maybe shaking out as many members as we can who are willing and able to meet with these people and hear their concerns, hear their hopes, and hear some of the great work that they're doing to make this city and this province a better place. I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming the École Massey campus club change to this, their legislature.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise with my colleague and introduce this group of guests here. I would be remiss — I know he's here in his capacity as parent chaperone — but to not single out one particular chaperone here today. Nicholas Cann, who is a partner at McKercher, one of Saskatchewan's largest law firms, is here today.

I just particularly wanted to thank him for, on top of his busy practice and his busy life as a parent chaperone, he also serves in a number of volunteer capacities in the legal community, including as past president of . . . He was once president of the Canadian Bar Association, very busy organizing the mid-winter meeting and annual conference, professional development conference that us lawyers gather at. And he currently serves on the board of Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan, an organization that's very important and near and dear to my heart, Mr. Speaker. And he also serves currently as a member of the Law Society.

So I'd ask all members to thank him for his volunteer service, thank him for his parenting, chaperoning duties today, and encourage all members to join me in welcoming him to his Legislative Assembly.

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

[13:45]

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the members opposite in welcoming Nicholas Cann to his legislature, Mr. Speaker. In addition to all the great volunteer work that Nicholas has done in the community, and specifically with respect to the practice of law in this province, he's one of my former law partners. And I always liked to think that he was the second-smartest lawyer at the McKercher firm when I was there. We laughed at that.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I got to work with Nicholas over many, many years, an accomplished lawyer, Mr. Speaker, and a credit to the profession. And I just wanted to welcome him to his legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A request for leave for extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In honour of Saskatchewan Multicultural Week, I would like to introduce, to you and through you to the other members, several guests seated in your gallery who are dedicated to promoting and supporting multiculturalism in Saskatchewan. Seated in your gallery today are board of directors president, Cosanna Preston-Idedia; communication coordinator, Ali Thompson; and Dr. Shela Hirani, who was recently awarded the Regina 2022 Women of Distinction Award for her work in health care.

In Saskatchewan we're lucky to have such a strong, diverse culture. And we thank the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan members and volunteers who have been serving our province for more than 45 years, helping make Saskatchewan the best place to call home. Our government is proud to proclaim November 19th to 27th Saskatchewan Multicultural Week. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the minister. I'd like to join in, of course, and welcome these wonderful and accomplished people to their gallery, Cosanna, Ali, and Dr. Hirani. Thank you so much, on behalf of the opposition, for all of the work that you do here in Saskatchewan to make this a better, a richer, a more diverse and more welcoming, and ultimately a more successful province. On behalf of the official opposition, it's my pleasure to welcome you, and I'd ask all members to join me.

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to join in with the minister and welcome the guests from the

Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, so Cosanna, Ali, and Dr. Hirani. I would be remiss if I didn't echo a few of the comments here. You've done nothing but make Saskatchewan better. And I want to make sure that you understand that all the community groups within this province and especially within this city, you've made them come together and if nothing else, we're better for that.

And I'd like all members to join me in welcoming MCOS [Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan] to their Legislative Assembly and thank them for all their work.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just quickly taking my feet here to introduce no stranger to this Legislative Assembly, Dylan Morin, seated in the west gallery, an incredible self-advocate in the disability community, Mr. Speaker. There is absolutely no stopping this young man. He is a fierce advocate for employment of the disability community, for equal pay for equal work.

I had the pleasure of attending an Inclusion Sask tour last week during which Dylan's work was highlighted. I'd encourage all members to participate in those Inclusion Sask tours. They're online, they're very accessible, and they speak to the important work that's being done in the community.

Lastly I just want to say, you know, the accessibility legislation that was introduced last week, Dylan was of course one of the first to get at me in my DMs [direct message] about meeting to talk about his views and his concerns and what he is happy about in that legislation. He's absolutely motivated and engaged in a level that is truly inspirational. So I want to welcome again Dylan to this, his Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Quickly follow the member from Elphinstone in welcoming Dylan to the Legislative Assembly today. Great to see him and thank him for his advocacy as we go through the disability legislation and other things that do come up as well. So welcome, Dylan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask 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. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery, I'm very pleased to introduce some new friends, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General for Manitoba. He's joined here today with his wife Kimberley and son Malachi. They were here for the big game of course yesterday. Bit of a heartbreaker. We won't get into that.

I got to know Minister Goertzen last month in Halifax, Mr. Speaker, at the national ministers conference. Saskatchewan supported Manitoba's request of the federal minister to include knife use and modified bear spray to the list of offences applicable for reverse onus for bail under section 515(6) of the Criminal Code.

As part of those discussions last month, we raised concerns about federal initiatives that have lowered standards across the board for bail, Bill C-75. Other issues that were raised, Saskatchewan certainly against federal expansion of cell phone searches at borders, Bill S-7; and the potential decriminalization of even fentanyl and methamphetamine.

Mr. Speaker, now is not the time — and I believe the minister agrees — to decriminalize dangerous drugs, reduce mandatory sentences for serious offences, including drug trafficking, gun smuggling, and armed robbery, Bill C-5. Canadians expect us to be responsive to rising crime and ensure that root cause reduction models actually work.

Minister Goertzen is a strong advocate for real solutions, and Manitoba is a strong friend of our province. Please join me in welcoming the minister and his family to our Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming Minister Goertzen and his family, Kimberley and Malachi, to our Legislative Assembly.

I hope, although last night didn't turn out quite the way I'm sure that they thought or wanted, I do hope that they had a really enjoyable weekend at the Grey Cup. I know we always enjoy, in Saskatchewan, opening up our doors in hospitality to all, including Bomber fans.

So thank you so much for coming to spend your weekend with us. It's lovely to see you here, and I truly do hope you enjoyed your trip and that you'll come back again. I ask all members to join me again in welcoming them to our Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you to all members of this Assembly, I would like to take the opportunity to welcome all of the guests that have joined us here today. I would like to make a particular mention of Kelvin Goertzen, who also served as the premier of Manitoba, the interim premier for about half a year while they were going through a leadership race there.

He joined us on our Council of Federation calls for a number of months, Mr. Speaker, and his input was greatly appreciated. And the calls that I had shared as well on a bilateral basis were greatly appreciated as well.

So I would like to welcome Kelvin, his wife, Kimberley, and Malachi to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, and thank them for coming to the big game yesterday. I know his allegiances would be quite clear in that game, Mr. Speaker. From a Saskatchewan perspective, it was a very perplexing time for us.

Do we support a team from the West, and are we able to get over that rivalry and that rift that we have with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers? But a great team, a great game in a great league, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank and welcome Kelvin Goertzen and his family to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to join with the member opposite in welcoming the group of young people from École Massey climate club here today. It's so great to see your passion that you bring certainly to, I'm sure every day your parents would attest to, but certainly to the environment. And I'd just like to also thank you for your environmental leadership. And I'd like to welcome you here to your legislature.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's an honour to join in the introduction of that debate team from the Hill School of Business here at the University of Regina. Welcome to your legislature. We wish you the best, and you represent your province and your university in such a great way. So it's a pleasure to have you here today.

And it's my pleasure as well to introduce a friend, a leader within our community, a former adversary on the floor of this legislature, Tina Beaudry-Mellor, to her Assembly. She continues to be very active within the community, continues to work with Deloitte. You can see she's a mentor to that debate team.

I had the pleasure of dancing drag with Tina once at Walk the Walk as a fundraiser for Lulu's Lodge here in Regina. Tina's somebody that's present in many ways throughout this community and gives back in many ways. And it's a pleasure to say hello to my friend and my former adversary on this floor, Tina Beaudry-Mellor.

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

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join along with yourself and the member opposite in welcoming Tina Beaudry-Mellor here to her Legislative Assembly. She's no stranger, obviously, serving in cabinet as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly].

I think in politics often we meet a lot of people in our walks of life, Mr. Speaker, but sometimes you get to meet people who become very special to you and become some of those very special people of your inner friendship circle. And I can honestly say that I have had the good pleasure and the good fortune to have spent a number of years around Tina now. And she has been a rock for me, a mentor, and just one of my biggest fans and one of my truly best friends.

So I would like to ask all members to welcome Tina to her Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Mr. Friesen: — To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members I would like to introduce my friend from Hague area, good friend of mine from high school days — and we've been great friends all the way through — Scott McFadyen here today. He was here last night for the Grey Cup, had a lot of fun out there.

And just a great guy Scott is. He does a Christmas light parade and toy drive for the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital. And you can see him with a Christmas tree on the roof of his Jeep. But yeah, Scott does a lot, gives a lot back to our community. So to all members to join me and welcome Scott to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce some members of the St. Paul's Hospital Foundation here in your gallery. We have Lecina Hicke up there. I apologize if I get anybody's name wrong. We have Sandhya Padmanabh — close? — director of philanthropy. Sorry, Lecina is the CEO [chief executive officer]. We have the foundation of major giving, which is Trish Cheveldayoff, which I think somebody else special on this floor is going to introduce in a second. And we have the founder, director of finance and operations, Effie Domes.

Mr. Speaker, this group has been absolutely critical in raising funds for the St. Paul's Hospital and area, such exciting as the da Vinci surgical system, the new CT [computerized tomography] scanner which I was able to tour through this summer, Mr. Speaker, be able to talk with the hospital and with the foundation on some of the challenges but also some of the successes that they've had at St. Paul's Hospital. So I'd like to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join in with the minister opposite in welcoming the group from the St. Paul's Hospital Foundation here today. We had a chance to chat a little bit last year about the surgical robot which I look forward to hearing more about, what initiatives are taking place now, what fundraising efforts are going on, as we have our reception later today. Of course, as the minister mentioned, this hospital foundation supports the . . . raises funds to support St. Paul's Hospital and the hospice. I want to thank you for all the work you're doing in our community to improve access to health care and welcome you to our Assembly.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all colleagues, I'd like to introduce my wife, Trish, who's seated in the gallery, part of the St. Paul's Hospital group. It's a very special day for Trish and myself. Twenty-five years ago today our son Carter was born, so we're very pleased about that.

In keeping with the Grey Cup theme, Trish came from Chatham, Ontario to Saskatchewan in 1989. She was invited to a Grey Cup party. She came from near the Hamilton area there, so she came to a party, Grey Cup party, all dressed in Hamilton Tiger-Cats gear. Little did she know at that time . . . 1989 of course is when the Riders won the Grey Cup. She realized after that that it's nothing but green in Saskatchewan here.

[14:00]

Trish had a career with CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] News for 20 years in Saskatchewan and now very much enjoys her time with St. Paul's Hospital Foundation. I ask all members to help me welcome my wife, Trish, to her Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Well I'd like to welcome just a handful of people who haven't already been introduced. So welcome. But I'd also like to just remind all the people in the gallery that you're not to take part in any deliberation — no clapping or taking any photos or speaking out. So welcome.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today during National Addiction Awareness Week to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to create a bipartisan committee on the mental health and addictions crisis. It's completely unacceptable that this government sits on their hands while Saskatchewan continues to break its own record in overdose deaths, losing 464 people in 2021 and trending toward record-breaking numbers in 2022.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately create a bipartisan legislative committee on the mental health and addictions crisis in Saskatchewan.

This petition today is signed by individuals from La Ronge, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that the Liberal-NDP [New Democratic Party] federal government continues to infringe on the constitutional rights of the province of Saskatchewan and implement policies that are detrimental to our province's economic well-being; that the commitments and 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 on 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 Regina and Pilot Butte. I do so present.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to again present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to fix the rural health care staffing crisis. I feel like there's a lot of folks out there, Mr. Speaker, who are deeply frustrated with a government that is sitting on its hands and using talking points from 30 years ago.

Meanwhile we have challenges in this province that are very real for people today in 2022, in particular when it comes to recruitment and retention of health care professionals. That has led to closures and disruptions in things like emergency rooms, acute care, lab and X-ray services, and that this ongoing pandemic has created burnout in our health care workforce.

And that's led to early retirement for folks who've been on the job for a lot of years, and also led to folks who are new to the health care workforce to look and struggle to see themselves in a province that shows so much disrespect to health care workers coming from this government.

Mr. Speaker, health care workers and their families are valuable assets in Saskatchewan communities and local economies and that's why so many people are interested in signing this petition. Today it's signed from folks from Wilkie.

And 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.

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 to prohibit conversion therapy. Mr. Speaker, this is a petition that's more important than ever as we continue to see hate and violence directed towards queer people in our country and in our neighbours to the south, as we most recently saw in Colorado. It's also more important than ever as we continue to hear allegations of abuse and discrimination against queer children come to light in our schools in Saskatchewan.

Ontario, Nova Scotia, PEI [Prince Edward Island], Yukon, and Quebec have enacted their own legislation. Municipalities like Regina and Saskatoon have shown leadership on this file as well.

We need legislation to ban conversion therapy in Saskatchewan to protect vulnerable children and adults from this heinous practice.

Thus the undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* names sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity as one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination; and that conversion therapy use discredited and abusive practices which attempt to actively change the sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

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 of youth and adults outside Saskatchewan for such purposes.

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

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again today to present our petition calling for paid sick leave legislation in Saskatchewan. The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: that a healthy workforce is good for the economy; that lives could be saved if workers could afford to stay home when they are sick; that no one should have to make the choice between going to work sick or risking the roof over their head by staying home; that workers, doctors, and public health officials continue to call for paid sick leave in Saskatchewan; and that the official opposition has twice now 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.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories for the petition today reside in Prince Albert. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

109th Grey Cup a Great Success

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Well thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. It may have not been our beloved Roughriders playing in this weekend's Grey Cup, but it was still a great week nonetheless.

Fans bundled up in their toques, mitts, and winter jackets to take in the 109th edition of the Grey Cup. The game itself was a back-and-forth contest between the Argonauts and the Blue Bombers

which came down to the wire. Minister Goertzen won't like this part, but Toronto came out on top in a nail-biter 24-23. Henoc Muamba was given both the Grey Cup MVP [most valuable player] and most valuable Canadian awards.

I'd like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the nearly 1,200 volunteers and coordinators who worked tirelessly to make this a successful event. Their hard work and effort were certainly noticed in how well the festivities went as a whole. On behalf of the Legislative Assembly, I want to thank those volunteers for helping show why football is our game.

An additional thank you to everyone who came out to Regina to enjoy the event. Whether you came out from Toronto, Winnipeg, or a small prairie town, the only reason this is possible is with the support of our fans. I had a chance to interact with many of the fans. All had a smile on their face and were in great spirits even if their team wasn't in the game.

Many say we are the home of football in Canada. I think this past week showed us why. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

World Children's Day

Ms. A. Young: — Why thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize November 20th, this past Sunday, as international World Children's Day, and again, to welcome in recognition the wonderful Climate Change Club from École Massey. They truly model what we hope to see, not just from all children, but from all residents in this province.

Mr. Speaker, World Children's Day marks the day the United Nations adopted the rights of the child in 1959 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. This day offers each of us an inspirational entry point to advocate, promote, and celebrate children's rights, translating into dialogue and actions that will build a better world. This day offers an annual day of action for children, by children. From climate change, education, mental health, poverty, discrimination, children and young people raise their voices on issues that matter to them.

And it's too easy, Mr. Speaker, in this place to forget who we work for. Too often we talk about the taxpayers and about adults, forgetting the hundreds of thousands of young people whose voices are excluded and who are underserved by legislators and policy-makers.

You know, anyone, Mr. Speaker, who spends time with an engaged young person is quickly reminded of all that we have forgotten, and the joy and integrity and brilliance of young people. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join me in recognizing this important day and the many, many kids pushing for visibility and action.

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

Snowbirds Celebrate 50th Anniversary

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In true

Saskatchewan style, this year the Grey Cup was delivered to Moose Jaw in a Tutor, the official jet of the Snowbirds. And they even performed two flyovers this year at the Grey Cup.

Mr. Speaker, speaking of the Snowbirds, on July 11th, 1971 at CFB [Canadian Forces Base] Moose Jaw, Major Glen Younghusband led seven red-and-white Tutors on their first official show as the Snowbirds. After a two-year delay, the Snowbirds Alumni Association was able to celebrate their 50th anniversary from October 20th to October 23rd in the fair city of Moose Jaw. The golden anniversary event consisted of a flight suit party hosted at the WDM [Western Development Museum] and a gala dinner hosted at the Moose Jaw Events Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to echo a few impressive facts about the Snowbirds that were shared by retired Lieutenant Colonel Dan Dempsey at the gala dinner. To date the Snowbirds have flown 2,767 official air shows before more than 150 million spectators. They have flown shows at 435 different show sites across the continent. Their legacy has been developed by 205 demo pilots, 50 team coordinators, and led by 27 leaders. The Snowbirds ground crew and support staff have numbered almost 500 personnel.

Mr. Speaker, please have everyone join me in congratulating the Snowbirds on their 50th anniversary.

Thank you.

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

Transgender Day of Remembrance

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about Transgender Day of Remembrance which was yesterday, November 20th. This tradition began as a vigil to honour the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman killed in 1998. It has continued to draw attention to the violence suffered by transgender people. Canada still has no official statistics on deaths of transgender people, and these deaths often go unreported.

But here's what we do know, Mr. Speaker. The median age for trans people is only 30 years old. They are more likely to face harassment, discrimination, and are five times more likely to attempt suicide. 2021 was the deadliest year on record for trans people. The 2021 census reported, for the first time, that 2,530 people in Saskatchewan over the age of 15 identified as trans or nonbinary. Mr. Speaker, no one deserves to be discriminated against because of their gender identity. People deserve to feel safe and included in our province.

Today I'd like to shout out to Cat, Jack, and Gwen. They are Saskatchewan folks meeting at JusticeTrans, a national organization committed to ending violence and injustice so two-spirited, trans, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming people can thrive. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask us all to take a moment to remember Rita and all transgender people across Canada and the world who have tragically lost their lives to transphobic violence.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Melfort Comets Take Home the Gold

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member from Indian Head-Milestone and I converged at the snow-blown gridiron to watch this year's nine-man football provincial finals. While many of us in this building have cheered his sons on from the comfort of our couches, he came and watched the Melfort Comets take on his Indian Head Broncos live on the snow-covered sidelines. Turns out the Melfort Comets continued their perfect record and took home the gold.

Mr. Speaker, there were a few Melfort dads watching our boys play that day who, unlike the member from Gardiner Park, never did take home the gold back in our day. What was known as the Hudson Bay flu always seemed to get in our way. Well something has changed and we like the results. Our head coach Dave Rogers and his committed coaching staff have been doing a great job with a team of committed players. As a parent of a young player, I want to thank all of the coaches across the province who sacrifice much for the benefit of our kids.

We watched our team reap what they sowed day after day, rain or snow, practising after school, learning many life lessons as they learned the game of football. Mr. Football from Gardiner Park was not only a father this year, he was also a coach. And he was sowing what he reaped into the next generation as a coach with his son on the Miller Marauders provincial 6A football champions second year in a row.

[14:15]

So, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to all the football winners this year, and a sincere thank you to the many coaches who give of their time and hearts to help us raise our kids and the next generation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Multicultural Week

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in recognition of Multicultural Week in Saskatchewan. The Government of Saskatchewan and the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan have partnered to celebrate Saskatchewan Multicultural Week in November for many years now.

Reflecting our provincial motto, "from many peoples, strength," this year's theme is, Together, We Make Saskatchewan Strong. Our government recognizes that multiculturalism contributes to maintaining a strong economy, strengthens our communities, and enhances our quality of life. This is why we are proud to continue collaborating with the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan to raise awareness of the benefits of cultural diversity. Through SaskCulture's Multicultural Initiatives Fund, close to \$4 million have been allocated to groups and communities over the past 11 years.

Mr. Speaker, this year Saskatchewan had the highest rate of growth, thanks to our ever-growing immigrant communities, because our province is focused on growth that works for everyone. I am also very proud to say that my brother and his family were among these new residents to Saskatchewan, arriving just a couple of weeks ago.

As part of the Saskatchewan's Growth Plan, we will continue to search for ways to celebrate our multicultural heritage and bring in more newcomers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

New Fire Hall in Lloydminster

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This summer the community of Lloydminster got a brand new fire hall. Fire Station No. 1 was officially opened on August 23rd to service the community. This has been a project six years in the works, Mr. Speaker, and I am extremely proud to finally see it completed.

The health, safety, and well-being of firefighters and first responders was considered in the design of every room and corridor of the new station. Mr. Speaker, at 16,522 square feet, this new facility is twice the size of the original fire hall. The facility has an integrated four-storey training structure with three deck levels to simulate high-rise buildings and technical rope rescue operations. This will ensure our Lloydminster first responders are receiving the best training opportunities possible to deliver the highest levels of services to residents.

The station also features a modern training room outfitted with firefighter education technology and has the capacity for growth as new technologies emerge.

Mr. Speaker, through you I ask all members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in congratulating Lloydminster firefighters on their new facility and thanking everyone who had a part in getting this facility built. Thank you

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Affordability Measures

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, we are in the affordability crisis of a generation, and we've continued to press this government for common-sense solutions. An investigation into meat and grocery prices, denied. Cancelling their massive utility rate hikes, denied. A break at the pumps, denied. Deny, deny, deny — it's the Sask Party motto, Mr. Speaker. No respect for the countless seniors, for the families, and for the businesses struggling to pay their bills.

This Premier has both the responsibility and the resources to offer more than one-time cheques to Saskatchewan people. Why won't he?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, most certainly due to the strength of our resource-based economy, the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Premier, was able to go out towards the end of August with her four-point affordability plan, Mr. Speaker.

This four-point affordability plan was on top of the \$2 billion that is in each and every annual budget that we put forward and includes things like the increase this year in the seniors' income

plan. It includes the Saskatchewan affordability tax credit cheque, Mr. Speaker, \$500. It includes savings, tax savings for small businesses that drive the economy in communities right across this province. And I would add it includes a billion dollars in deficit reduction, Mr. Speaker. That will save dollars paid in interest for years to come, Mr. Speaker.

That is the four-point affordability plan that was put forward by this Deputy Premier, Mr. Speaker, and it most certainly builds on the \$2 billion that are in each and every annual budget that save families money each and every year in this province.

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

Ms. Beck: — Speaking of, Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister said last week, “It’s not like we have the money.” Mr. Speaker, that simply isn’t true. There’s plenty of extra resource revenue even after those cheques are delivered and cashed. More still if they had only collected a penny on the dollar during resource boom times like we had proposed.

This government is flush with cash. The problem is how they choose to spend it. We should be spending this money supporting Saskatchewan people, not taking \$8,000 flights down the road or wasting 167 million on the AIMS [administrative information management system] fiasco.

Will this Premier start helping the people of this province? Will he reverse his fee and tax and rate hikes today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we did change policy on a number of those after listening to the people, a number of those proposed tax . . . Mr. Speaker, we did change course on that policy after talking to a number of people. That was one of the points in the four-point plan that we had had. That was in addition to providing . . . Mr. Speaker, that was in addition to providing each and every resident over 18 years of age that files taxes in this province a \$500 Saskatchewan affordability tax credit cheque, only possible due to the resource strength of the Saskatchewan economy that we have, Mr. Speaker.

I see again it’s the same old NDP opposition, Mr. Speaker. They were, under Dwain Lingenfelter, a nickel on the dollar. Today we see them, they’re down to a penny on the dollar, Mr. Speaker. But make no mistake. Their plan is to increase taxes on Saskatchewan residents, not take 112,000 families off the provincial tax roll like this government has done over the last 15 years.

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

Social Housing Units

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, 2 out of 32 and that Premier wants a prize. His priorities are more and more misplaced. Between inviting a convicted wife killer to tea, spending millions on police forces that no one asked for, he’s failing to deliver on issues that matter to Saskatchewan people.

And that includes, that includes, Mr. Speaker, ensuring that people have a decent roof over their heads. How can that Premier justify people living on the streets or even freezing to death in our province when his government owns 3,000 vacant housing units? What’s his plan to fill them?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we’ve seen this government invest, and invest heavily alongside our community-based organizations across this province. We’re seeing the Minister of Social Services working, for instance, in the community of Saskatoon today on a shelter in that community to ensure that we do offer services to those that need it, Mr. Speaker.

We have a number of Saskatchewan Housing residences across this province that are available, Mr. Speaker. Most certainly that is due to the fact that we didn’t sell those housing units off a number of years ago like many other provinces did across the nation. Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible] . . . a lift, a most recent lift in this last year’s budget to our community-based organizations to ensure that they are keeping pace, so they’re able to keep pace with their wages with the public sector, as well as others across the province, Mr. Speaker.

That relationship that this government has — the Minister of Social Services has, and the entire government, Mr. Speaker — with our community-based organizations is one that is valued, and it’s one that we’re going to continue to work on, Mr. Speaker, so that we can provide valuable services, including housing, to the people of this province.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, more out-of-touch rhetoric from that Premier. These people are not asking for a bigger house. They’re simply asking for a roof over their heads. And if these homes have fallen into disrepair, that’s because this government allowed them to. What other government asset, Mr. Speaker, would be allowed to become rat infested or become an explosion hazard?

People of this province deserve better. People including Dominika Kosowska, who’s here with us today. Dominika has been fighting for safe living conditions for her and her son in their unlivable Sask Housing unit. Surely this Premier can agree that no one relying on the province for housing should be forced to live in mice- and rat-infested homes. This simply needs to be fixed.

Will he commit to meeting and working with Dominika today?

The Speaker: — I would just like to remind our guests not to take part in the deliberation. No clapping or speaking please. I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This issue’s been brought up in the House before, and I answered directly. My understanding is that this case in Saskatoon has been looked at by professionals, and they are working on that and have treated the area that the member referenced. And that work is under way. If this continues to be an issue, we’ll bring back the professionals in the private sector, Mr. Speaker, in order to continue to treat it.

In my understanding, it's not a widespread concern across the many units in that particular building complex. But again, we'll continue to work with anyone who brings these concerns forward and that will continue. I'd be happy to meet with this individual after question period to understand what the issues are, and we'll go from there.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, Dominika's issues have not been resolved, which is why, unfortunately, she finds herself here with us today. This is more from an out-of-touch government, Mr. Speaker. It increasingly feels like up is down and down is up with this lot.

Saskatchewan landlords are warning of an alarming trend in increased evictions in low-income earners, Mr. Speaker, while this Sask Party government increases utility rates and doubles down on their botched SIS [Saskatchewan income support] program. Hundreds of people struggle with homelessness across this province while — and it's an escalating issue across this province — while this government sits on 3,000 empty housing units.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what is the plan to get those in need into these vacant units and to do it before tragedy strikes again?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, in terms of the 700 houses under review here today, not all of them are available for several different reasons: either they're being repaired, they've been destroyed by previous tenants, or they don't meet the needs of the clients that are looking. So approximately 300 units were ready to rent in October and 145 units were offered, Mr. Speaker.

We're continuing to work on being able to house more people. We've done some things. Mr. Speaker. But traditionally local housing authorities have had housing for seniors and families and those with disabilities. And the member opposite, in a letter to me in regard to the number of houses available and in terms of using those units for different reasons, she said ensuring the compatibility of community members is a key housing-first principle. Mr. Speaker, that's important as well.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, these units are rat infested; they are exploding. There needs to be action on this now, Mr. Speaker, because there are significant costs to this government's continued inaction. Winter has just begun, and we've already lost lives to exposure. There's a human toll, Mr. Speaker. But there are other consequences too. New Sask Health records show that there were nearly 1,300 visits to emergency rooms for cold weather-related injuries since winter 2019. No question that number will only increase this year.

So does the minister recognize that this government's abject failures on housing adds strain to our crumbling health care system and actually costs the public more? Does he recognize that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure?

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

[14:30]

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, of course we're working every day. We have 18,000 units that we look after, Mr. Speaker, around \$35 million we spend just on upkeep and operating dollars just to keep those places reasonable and able to rent.

So, Mr. Speaker, we do a lot on the prevention side as well in terms of housing, but also on the other side of the ministry in terms of working with the most vulnerable people. We've repaired 5,800 homes, invested 806 million since 2007 on developing 18,000 units, Mr. Speaker, 4,200 of which are affordable.

We're going to continue to work on . . . Mr. Speaker, the member talked about homelessness. We've just introduced an increase to our 338 shelter units within the province, Mr. Speaker, for this winter an additional 60. We're working very hard with our municipal partners, \$1.7 million investment. And that is on top of all the other things we do. If I have another question, I'll get into those.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the minister can rattle off as many numbers as he wants. Dominika raised this concern weeks ago. She is living with rats. Weeks ago, weeks ago she had to go to the media to have her concerns addressed, and they have still not been addressed. Here she is with her nine-year-old son and she wants answers, Mr. Speaker.

And this is no small thing, these emergency visits, Mr. Speaker. Since winter 2019, over 600 people showed up to the ER [emergency room] with exposure. Over 500 presented with frostbite and hypothermia. Our emergency rooms are literally bursting at the seams, and people without homes are among them. Without a housing plan, people will continue to fall through the cracks, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister commit to a plan to start filling those vacant homes with those in need, if for no other reason than to keep people out of our overcrowded emergency rooms?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, we're doing just that. Every day, we're working with our CBO [community-based organization] sector, municipalities in order to find supportive housing for those at risk or chronically homeless, Mr. Speaker. We will use hotels if we need to, if our shelters find themselves full in a certain time. But we've increased the number of spots for shelter services in those emergency situations.

And not just the emergency situation side. We've partnered with RT/SIS [Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services Inc.], Mr. Speaker. We've partnered with STC [Saskatoon Tribal Council] for low-barrier supportive living, part of that housing continuum, Mr. Speaker. And we thank our CBO partners. We have the sawēiyhtotān project. We are working with Egadz, Cress Housing, Sanctum housing, Silver Sage, Mr. Speaker.

Those partnerships will continue. We need those community partnerships. We need help from our municipality, and we need a space to have these folks to be looked after, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to work with them.

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

Provision of Mental Health Care

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, we're also joined today by Kristen Altieri. Kristen has been struggling with her mental health since she was 16 years old. This has been devastating for her. She's attempted to end her own life six times. She's had to privately seek out-of-province diagnostics and care that's not provided to her here in Saskatchewan. Why has Kristen had to travel out of province on her own dime to get the basic mental health care that she needs? And what happens to those who can't afford to?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I welcome Kristen to her Legislative Assembly here this afternoon. And I would be willing to sit down with Kristen after question period is done to have a discussion about her situation.

Mr. Speaker, I can say at a very high level, we as a government take this issue very seriously. It's why we're investing record amounts into mental health and addictions supports and services in this year's budget — \$470 million into a variety of different initiatives and areas, Mr. Speaker. And we're trying to expand those services right across this province, in our major centres, in our rural communities, and northern and remote areas of Saskatchewan as well, Mr. Speaker.

And we are making progress, but I do acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that there is more work to be done. And this government is committed to making sure that we do that work to enhance mental health supports right across this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, Kristen finally got a correct diagnosis and medication that worked, in Alberta. But it didn't end there. Now her primary caregiver, a nurse practitioner here in Regina, is planning to shut down her practice. Like countless others in Saskatchewan, Kristen can't find a new doctor and soon she'll be left with no one to prescribe her meds. Her nurse practitioner recommended a number of replacements, but none are accepting new patients or they've already left the province. How long do people like Kristen have to be left vulnerable before this government addresses the mental health care staffing crisis?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I said previously, I'm willing to sit down with Kristen and talk a bit more about her situation and just to ensure that she's been in contact with the appropriate officials to try and find her the

pathway to care that she needs and assist in any way that we can with her or any other individual in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we're trying to make these investments into mental health and addictions services and supports right across Saskatchewan. That includes providing more access and greater access for people. It's why we're investing in urgent care centres here in Regina and also in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, that will have a separate intake for mental health cases.

As an example, Mr. Speaker, we're providing additional supports and adding more training seats when it comes to registered psychiatric nursing. We're trying to bring in more psychiatrists into this province. There's been an increase in that area, but we do need to add more in that area as well. And those conversations and discussions are under way, knowing that we're trying to make these decisions and make that positive impact as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, this lack of resources for mental health care is a province-wide issue. It's a system-wide problem that needs system-wide solutions. Between a lack of dedicated resources and unmanageable wait times, the burden of navigating the system is not fair to people like Kristen. She's living with the worst of a mental health system set up to fail, never mind the service disruptions, bed closures, and overstretched primary care.

The minister boasts about his initiatives, yet things aren't getting any better. Does the minister understand that he's failing people like Kristen?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we acknowledge that there is more work to do, but I think it's important to also acknowledge and put on the record that the investments that we are making is making an impact and it is adding more health care providers, more doctors, more psychiatrists, more nurses, more care aides, more registered psychiatric nurses to the system, Mr. Speaker. And we're trying to continue to do that.

We recognize that there are pressures, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to that. The government also provides funding to a number of other initiatives as well, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to mental health supports, whether it's the walk-in mental health clinics that are now operating in 31 communities across this province, police and crisis teams that provide support as well, mobile crisis centres, Mr. Speaker. Those are just a few of the initiatives that are out there.

In addition to that, there's a myriad of community-based organizations and non-government organizations that do very, very good work in this area as well, Mr. Speaker. And we're partnering with some of them and continuing to expand upon that work right across this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Marshals Service

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, that minister and this government wants praise for the work that they've done. It's not helping people like Kristen. That's why she's here.

Mr. Speaker, last week we learned that the Minister of Corrections and Policing hadn't consulted a single person on her new \$20 million marshals service. And that is evident by the minister's own comments about the program. Despite framing the program as "supplementing and augmenting our policing services that currently exist," the minister has already stated that this new service would compete with existing rural RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] detachments for officers and pull away resources.

Why create a new police service rather than bolstering an existing service?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — The Saskatchewan marshals service will provide additional and targeted enforcement presence across Saskatchewan, conduct proactive investigations, and support RCMP and municipal policing operations. And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, the success of our crime reduction teams, of which there are many in the province of Saskatchewan, has given us a solid blueprint on how to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, we hear from our members, sitting on this side of course, about the different issues, the challenges, gunshots fired off in the middle of the night. People are not feeling safe. The public demands that this province — and we take it seriously — provide the adequate and targeted and very specific level of policing in the province, Mr. Speaker.

SMS [Saskatchewan marshals service] will specifically . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And what do you know about it? And SMS specifically focuses on providing enhanced law enforcement . . . Okay.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — The minister's own CRT [crime reduction team] combines existing police services, police organizations that already exist to work together. This is talking about a completely new policing body. Why does the minister feel that creating a completely new police force is better than the RCMP?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and public service.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through the provincial policing services agreement, which is with the RCMP, we fund 70 per cent of the RCMP's cost. In '22-23 that was a total of 211.3 million, Mr. Speaker. Our crime reduction teams, seven of those teams are with the RCMP; warrant enforcement and suppression teams, 20 positions; and our Saskatchewan trafficking and response teams, 30 officers, Mr. Speaker.

We provide 18.4 million to support municipal policing initiatives

in the province, which of course includes 141 members. Mr. Speaker, this is about supporting and augmenting the existing policing services in the province. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Strange that nobody in policing actually agrees with the minister on that. Mr. Speaker, last week the mayor of Vibank stated on social media that no one was asking for a marshals service, and that they've been begging, they've been begging for an increased investment from this government in the RCMP for years.

Rhonda Blackmore, the commanding officer of Saskatchewan's RCMP, has stated that the money could be better spent providing more resources to the RCMP.

Morgan Buckingham, regional director for the National Police Federation in Saskatchewan, said these changes were "completely unnecessary."

Mr. Speaker, does the minister honestly believe that she knows better than the policing organizations and municipalities in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unlike the members opposite, we do not use social media — Twitter, Facebook — to get comments to use in question period, Mr. Speaker.

We fund the RCMP and will continue to fund the RCMP to the tune of \$211.3 million per year, Mr. Speaker. Crime reduction teams, which obviously include the RCMP; warrant enforcement; Saskatchewan traffic response teams, 30 officers. 18.4 million to municipal policing entities within the province of Saskatchewan, 141 members, Mr. Speaker. We'll take no information from the members opposite.

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

Interpersonal Violence Rates and Support for Second-Stage Shelters

Ms. Sarauer: — It was the mayor of Vibank, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure what she has against him and his Twitter handle.

While the Sask Party was able to find \$20 million for a marshals service, second-stage shelters have been calling for years for the province to provide operational funding. Most other provinces provide operational funding for these essential services, but Saskatchewan leaves them to fundraise on their own. And after inviting convicted wife killer Colin Thatcher to this legislature, Saskatchewan people have very serious doubts about this Sask Party's commitment to ending intimate partner violence.

Will this Sask Party government do the right thing and finally provide operational funding for second-stage shelters today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and

Sport.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet with the Status of Women ministers from across the country and we were pleased to endorse a national action plan to end gender-based violence. And I signed that agreement on behalf of Saskatchewan.

And it troubles me that the opposition never bothered finding out what we were doing. They never asked us, what exactly are you doing? We're rolling up our sleeves. We're making sure that in fact we are doing everything we can to sign on to the national action plan to ensure that our programs are being fully funded.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm so disappointed in the opposition that they never bother to find out exactly what are we doing to end gender-based violence in this province. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 106 — *The Police Amendment Act, 2022*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 106, *The Police Amendment Act* of 2022 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 106 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 107 — *The Provincial Protective Services Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 107, *The Provincial Protective Services Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 107 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 104 — *The Local Improvements Amendment Act, 2022*

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 104, *The Local Improvements Amendment Act, 2022*. Mr. Speaker, local improvements are an option for municipalities to fund infrastructure programs that benefit specific properties. The projects would be funded by the municipality and impact property owners. Local improvements may include sidewalks, alleys, lights, and parks.

The Act describes the work and services that may be undertaken as a local improvement, the approval process, how to determine special assessments, and how property owners can petition for or against a local improvement. The Act gives municipalities and property owners the important tool to pay for local works and services. The Act has not been significantly amended since 2000. The changes proposed in this bill will ensure it still meets the needs of municipalities, the public, and the province.

The Ministry of Government Relations previously surveyed municipalities, school divisions, and the Saskatchewan Municipal Board as part of a review of the local improvement approval process, and 67 responses were received. Over the past year, we've taken those ideas and consulted with the municipal sector stakeholders to determine what improvements to make.

There are four main categories of amendments. First, school properties would be exempt from local improvement levies. Although exempt from property taxes, schools are currently subject to local improvement levies. We have heard from school boards that they are facing financial difficulties when faced with unexpected local improvement levies. This creates problems for school divisions' budgets since the board can no longer set their own mill rate to recover costs. Therefore schools will be exempt from local improvement levies.

Second, the local improvement approval process will be streamlined to be faster and more efficient. Currently the

Saskatchewan Municipal Board approves all local improvements. In many cases this is unnecessary, especially when the municipality is also receiving board approval for financing the project. Municipalities will now be able to approve local improvements through bylaws.

The third area of amendment involved requiring public consultation when there is no option for property owners to petition against a local improvement. Also when municipal councils choose this option, the Saskatchewan Municipal Board approval will still be required. With the results of these public consultations, the board can gauge the level of support for the project before approval. The amendment approval process will improve efficiency while maintaining public accountability and engagement. Removing Saskatchewan Municipal Board approval, in cases where owners can petition, removes redundancy and saves everyone time and effort.

The fourth area of amendment involves minor amendments to streamline the public and update the Act to better align petition notice and communication methods with other municipal legislation. For example, more flexibility has been added to allow electronic communications such as email will be an acceptable way to contact a person when it comes to petitioning and notices required.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank our municipal sector partners and associations for their input in developing the amendments proposed in this bill, as well as the Saskatchewan Municipal Board and the Ministry of Education.

So, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 104, *The Local Improvements Amendment Act, 2022*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill 104 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet and to enter remarks on the record on Bill No. 104, *The Local Improvements Amendment Act* on behalf of the official opposition. I listened with interest to the member opposite, the Minister of Government Relations, to his comments about this bill. Certainly we're in agreement that there were some much-needed changes in this area, Mr. Speaker.

I understand that this bill will mean that schools will be exempt from local improvement levies, Mr. Speaker, that there will be a streamlined approval process, and it provides for a public consultation process so that local boards can gauge support for certain projects, Mr. Speaker. And all of these do sound like needed changes, although I look forward to hearing from my colleagues and the affected critics on this piece of legislation to ensure we really get it right.

Certainly it's very good to see that this piece of legislation frees up municipalities. But one flag is that obviously homeowners cannot be left to shoulder the costs of some of these local improvements, Mr. Speaker. They're simply too high for local households to absorb.

And you know, I would though like to join with the members opposite in thanking our municipal partners in the work they do.

Increasingly as we're out there in the community talking to folks, we hear concerns about the financial pressures that municipalities face as more and more is offloaded to them by this provincial government. They're often forced to shoulder more and more of the costs associated with governing.

I would also note that this government's decision to remove the local taxing power from school boards really hampered them in terms of being able to provide for the really unique and crucial needs of their communities around them. I do though think it is important to free schools of financial burdens. Given we've been calling, you know, on this government for increased funding, and we've seen nothing but cuts to that sector, this is a change that we would support, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, I look forward to hearing from my colleagues and the affected critics on this piece of legislation. And I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 104, *The Local Improvements Amendment Act, 2022*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 104. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 105 — *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2022*

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you. Thank you for recognizing me, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 105, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2022*.

The Local Government Election Act, 2015 governed local elections across the province. This included elections for mayors, reeves, and council members in all types of municipalities. It also governed school board elections, which are often held jointly by municipalities and school boards. This legislation is necessary to enable efficient and transparent elections for municipalities and school divisions across Saskatchewan.

The Act is typically amended in the period between elections. The last local elections were held in November of 2020, and the next are scheduled for November 2024. This schedule gives us a window to make improvements. It also gives local election officials time to prepare for changes before election day.

Mr. Speaker, consultations for these amendments began immediately after the 2020 election, with a survey sent out to all local governments, and 460 responses were received. Following the survey, the Ministry of Government Relations staff worked to better understand the needs and perspectives of stakeholders. Ministry staff made presentations, attended conferences, and took part in working groups. Meanwhile our stakeholders continue to provide input and suggestions for improvements to the Act.

The amendments achieve four goals. First, returning officers will

have more authority and flexibility to make local-level decisions. This will make it easier for them to conduct elections. With the changes in this bill, returning officers can temporarily postpone an election if there is a local emergency or inclement weather, without the need for the minister's order. Moving forward, returning officers will also have the responsibility to decide on polling areas and locations. These changes will allow returning officers to set up polls where there is a greatest need, not the council members who might also be on the ballot.

The second goal for these amendments, Mr. Speaker, is to better enable the use of voter lists and electronic record keeping. Several stakeholders said it was time to promote the use of these tools from the digital age.

The third goal of these amendments is to improve voter accessibility by making it easier to set up polling places in hospitals or personal care home facilities and require all municipalities to establish at least one advance poll, increasing convenience for giving voters more opportunity to take part in their local election. Advance voting is becoming more common and should be standard practice. This additional change extends voting eligibility to the spouses and dependants of a student who moved because of their studies.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there will be many efficiencies and process improvements made to the Act that respond to and implement suggestions from stakeholders. For example, candidates will have to provide their contact information with their nomination, making it easier for the returning officer to contact them. A municipality can move up their nomination deadline to provide election officials more time to plan and prepare for election day, especially if there is a need to issue a second call for nominations. There will also be more clarity for how tied votes are resolved, including giving municipalities the option to hold a by-election to determine the winner.

Mr. Speaker, over the past two years, government has discussed other amendments not in front of you today. Most notably, there is no change to the dates for municipal and school board elections. Our message throughout consultation was that stakeholders should agree on a common date before the government would consider changing election day. There was no consensus on this issue. Consistent election dates have many benefits, such as administrative coordination, improving public awareness, and the ability to vote for school boards at the same time as municipal councils. Therefore, local election dates will remain unchanged to keep consistency across the province.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, before I finish I'd like to take a moment to thank all the many stakeholders. Many of the amendments you see were proposed by stakeholders who devoted many hours to suggesting and refining the changes in this bill. Thank you for your input, advice, and feedback in the development of this legislation.

However the work is not done yet. Next spring the ministry will consult stakeholders and associations on associated regulation changes. The ministry will also continue to provide education and training to municipalities on this Act and how to run elections. This will help local officials familiarize themselves with the changes well before the next round of local elections.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, this bill reflects the government's continued commitment to provide efficient and accessible local elections throughout our province. So, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 105, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2022*.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 105 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 105, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act*, and provide initial comments on this piece of legislation on behalf of the official opposition.

This is a bill that comes with changes that would give returning officers, as the minister outlined, more power, more authority. It will allow them to determine the location of polling places, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It will provide them with the authority to change poll hours, dates, or locations. As the minister noted, you know, if for example there is a local emergency or a weather-related disruption, that would give returning officers . . . to pivot in that situation.

It would also provide returning officers the ability to . . . authority over voting in hospitals and care homes, Mr. Speaker, and of course this official opposition supports changes that would improve accessibility for the folks who are, you know, seeking to cast a ballot and who find themselves in those situations, Mr. Speaker.

The legislation also creates a framework for voter registry data use, revision, protection, and information requests, Mr. Speaker. And I know that our critic will be taking a closer look at these aspects of the legislation.

We have seen a concerning trend over the years, Mr. Speaker: a decreasing voter turnout. So I can say with confidence that this opposition supports changes and undertakings that would address that decreased participation in the political process, Mr. Speaker. To the extent that this piece of legislation does just that, we'll have more to say about that in the days and weeks to come.

There was one aspect of the bill that I was concerned about. That is the failure to change the date of the local municipal elections. Right now, we're going to see in 2024 two weeks between when folks go out to elect their local representatives and then their MLAs. We know from the last election, Mr. Speaker, that this did provide for a certain amount of confusion, and in some cases we actually saw it decrease participation in the political process.

And that is why there's been consistent feedback and really some pretty loud and direct and clear pressure from municipalities, Mr. Speaker, to change the dates of elections so that these elections are no longer on a collision course, Mr. Speaker. And I was very disappointed to see that, you know . . . I hear of the minister saying that they heard, you know, that they didn't hear consistent consultation on that, or feedback on that, Mr. Speaker.

We heard pretty clear and direct feedback from all players that this is something that was needed and that we should see. And the other person that provided feedback was the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Speaker. Michael Boda recommended that these

dates be changed, and that is likely due to his mandate of, you know, improving the political process.

And we see with these colliding elections that there's more confusion. And it's almost like the Sask Party government likes to see that kind of confusion around election time. Mr. Speaker, I have no other insights into why they would fail to make this much-needed change that would increase voter turnout, that would strengthen the process of our elections, Mr. Speaker, and strengthen the integrity of our elections. So that's an example, Mr. Speaker, of where, you know, you hear from the minister that the goal of this bill is to improve accessibility to the political process, but in fact we see a failure to make a very clear and needed change that undermines that stated goal.

So you know, we will be looking through this legislation very much with a fine-tooth comb. It's very important that we get these issues right, these issues that go to the heart of our democratic process, the integrity of our electoral systems, and again, that need to improve and increase the participation of Saskatchewan people in the democratic processes, be they local or provincial, Mr. Speaker, or other, for that matter.

So with that, I look forward to hearing from my colleagues on this piece of legislation and I would move to adjourn debate on Bill 105, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2022*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 96

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Marit that **Bill No. 96 — *The Leafcutting Beekeepers Registration Repeal Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter in this afternoon briefly to Bill No. 96, the leafcutting beekeepers registration repeal, Mr. Speaker. My remarks will be short and sweet, probably not stinging, Mr. Speaker.

This bill thus far hasn't created a great buzz, but we will consult with this very important industry with respect to this legislation, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be really important to make sure that any changes government is making on this front recognizes the importance of honeybees as well as beekeepers and apiaries in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there's good leadership in Saskatchewan to draw upon on this front, the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Development Commission, for example, Mr. Speaker. And certainly it's our

expectation that government will have worked with these stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, in deriving this legislation. And it's our expectation that this legislation is in the best interests of this important industry and in supporting beekeepers and in supporting the health of honeybees within Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We'll certainly, you know, follow up with the minister at committee to go through the feedback that's been received. We'd invite all beekeepers and those involved in this sweet industry in Saskatchewan to connect with us and certainly government with any concerns that they may have, or opportunities to strengthen the current legislative environment, Mr. Speaker. This is a repeal so we would invite folks to connect with us if they have concerns with that repeal.

You know, just a shout-out to the Saskatchewan beekeeping commission, Mr. Speaker, for their good . . . the development commission for their good work, Mr. Speaker. And with that being said, Mr. Speaker, we'll follow up with government, get to a full understanding as to the consultation that's gone on thus far, and we'll, as the official opposition, certainly work to make sure that any changes are in the best interests of this important industry in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion that Bill No. 96 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed?

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Deputy Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Bill No. 100

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Marit that **Bill No. 100 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Accretion) Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be brief as it relates to Bill No. 100, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Accretion) Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker. I've read the minister's remarks, Mr. Speaker. I understand that these changes represent what's common practice in legislative environments in other provinces, Mr. Speaker. We want to do a proper scan on that front, Mr. Speaker.

What I would invite though is anyone who's impacted on this front,

certainly landowners, surface-rights holders, Mr. Speaker, to connect with us with any concerns with respect to this legislation. Some of the changes seem practical in nature and the minister has held up other jurisdictions as a model, Mr. Speaker. We just want to make sure that in fact, where the rubber hits the road, that these changes are practical and that they're in the best interests of all involved, Mr. Speaker.

We'll want to have a full understanding of all that have been consulted by this government on this front and what the perspectives were that were shared, and if there's any concerns with the legislative change that's been brought, Mr. Speaker. So we invite stakeholders to connect with us directly, Mr. Speaker. We'll be following up with the minister at committee, for example, Mr. Speaker, to get, you know, further and broader answers on these fronts, Mr. Speaker. And at this time that's about all I have to say, Mr. Speaker, because we'll follow up at the committee level with respect to Bill No. 100, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Accretion) Amendment Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion that Bill No. 100 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed?

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — To the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Deputy Speaker: — This bill now stands committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Bill No. 88

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 88 — *The Saskatchewan First Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter adjourned debate on behalf of the official opposition with respect to Bill 88, *The Saskatchewan First Act*.

Mr. Speaker, this bill reasserts that Saskatchewan has exclusive jurisdiction over the exploration, development, and management of natural resources. The bill also amends the *Saskatchewan Act* and the *Constitution Act, 1867* to include provisions reasserting exclusive legislative jurisdiction over natural resources, forestry, and power generation, Mr. Speaker. Finally, this bill will establish an economic impact assessment tribunal, which will examine and report on the impacts of federal policies on Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is slim on meaningful and substantive legislative change and heavy on furthering the Sask Party government's typical brand of grievance-based, divisive politics. It's lazy. It's unserious, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan deserve a better attempt than this.

The Premier and his government can often be heard proclaiming that they are standing up for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. But if this were really true, we would be seeing far less impotent posturing and grandstanding, and instead a mature approach to professional negotiation with the federal government. That is how serious governments conduct themselves, Mr. Speaker.

This bill has furthermore been roundly criticized, including by legal scholars. Eric Adams, an associate professor at the University of Alberta, also an expert in constitutional law, had this to say:

I suppose it may fulfill some political need, where Saskatchewan has to seem it's getting tough. But, practically speaking, it's almost impossible to think that this act has any substance to it.

He went on to say:

Maybe it satisfies some political objective. But on the ground, if people think that this law does anything, they are mistaken.

What's more, Mr. Speaker, this bill has also been widely condemned by Indigenous groups. No wonder, as there were zero consultations whatsoever around this bill with First Nations or Métis peoples by the Sask Party government. Sadly that's just par for the course with this government, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

First of all, we've got a press release from the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations which characterized the Premier's plan as "a direct threat to First Nations' inherent and treaty rights." FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] Vice-Chief Heather Bear told the media that the Premier and his government "continually ignore First Nations rights." This is shameful, Mr. Speaker, and it's oppressive.

Further to this, delegates attending the legislative assembly of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan unanimously supported their leadership's rejection of *The Saskatchewan First Act*. They are calling for the immediate withdrawal of the proposed legislation.

Mr. Speaker, beyond the botched consultation on this bill, this bill includes nothing of substance to actually help Saskatchewan people. Introducing redundant legislation is lazy and it's completely unhelpful. So unlike the government, our critic will continue to consult widely and appropriately with stakeholders around the impacts of this bill.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll wrap up my remarks, and I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 88, *The Saskatchewan First Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 94

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 94 — *The Public Pension and Benefits Administration Corporation Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to offer my remarks on Bill No. 94, *The Public Pension and Benefits Administration Corporation Act*. This Act is to replace the PEPP [public employees pension plan] and the MEPP [municipal employees' pension plan] with the above here. This is creating a non-profit, non-Crown corporation to administer public and municipal employee pension funds.

I'm cautiously optimistic about these proposed changes. What I'm very curious about is how many folks that are going to be impacted by this are being consulted. And I would hope that . . . I know that a lot of work has gone into this to make the changes. And I'm pleased that we're looking at finding ways to better meet the needs of the citizens that we serve and are here for. So I won't say much about this because the critic for this area would probably have a lot more questions to ask, and also get to . . . We'll give them an opportunity to reach out to other stakeholders on this bill.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill No. 94, *The Public Pension and Benefits Administration Corporation Act*. miigwech.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 95

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 95 — *The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to join in on Bill No. 95, *The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Amendment Act, 2022*. Obviously I know on our side the critic will want to spend some time on this and making sure we get it right.

This, from my understanding looking at the bill, it talks about landowners getting compensation when somebody goes on the property for doing certain, you know, work, for whatever they're

doing, whether they're drilling oil . . . I guess there's companies. We all rely on that and, you know, the oil companies and different things that bring in money to our good province to help pay for stuff. You know, we understand that. We want to make sure.

But at the end of the day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want to make sure those landowners are compensated should they, you know, get into an agreement, a lease, an agreement, that any fees that are owed to them are paid. And I know that my colleague will be having a look at this, will be talking to landowners, making sure that this amendment and this change that's being proposed by the government . . . I'm hoping the government has done the due diligence and checked with landowners to make sure they got it right.

And I know my colleague, as the critic, also is willing to take any calls if people have concerns about . . . As we go along in the rural area and the farming communities, you know, we're hearing from different people. I know there's times where, you know, our leader's been going out, and these are kind of the conversations that need to be happening. And I'm glad our leader, our critic, and members are out there finding out exactly how are some of these issues impacting our rural people in our province, our farmers, our ranchers — there's many of them — producers, some of them doing the good work that they do.

I know we're reaching out and talking to them and we're getting out in the rural area, which is good. And you know, I'm glad that our leader and members are reaching out, finding out what are issues facing landowners. And if this is one of the . . . You know, Bill 95 is an issue that they're probably getting fees paid to them that are owed to them for whatever reason. I don't know what would cause that reason why they're not. But I think in here, there's being proposed changes in here where somebody, the payer, will have to notify the ministry that fees have been paid, leases have been paid. And they're talking about, from my understanding, I get from maybe a certain . . . Whether it's a board or a committee, there's some type of a structure where they will be able to go and have a hearing or a judgment.

And let's just make sure, like I said, we're getting it right so that those that are owed money are truly paid, when somebody is on their land and they have a lease agreement, that those fees are being paid. I don't know what type of situation arises when someone doesn't get paid or what's happening. But obviously there must be some type of a problem, I'm assuming, or I don't think we would be seeing changes to legislation, making amendments.

So maybe there have been some situations where . . . I don't know what they are, but I know my colleague, the critic, will reach out and is open. If anybody's having issues, reach out to our critic, you know, and they can have a look at that. But I guess at the bottom line, we want to just make sure that our landowners, people of this good province, if they're owed dollars and when they're working with, you know, different companies, that they're making sure any deals, any lease agreements, any type of compensation should be paid to them once that person's done or if that person's utilizing the land in some way. We want to make sure that those landowners are compensated the way they should be, you know, in the agreement, that the good intention was put forward to make sure that they get that.

So I'm just going over this initially. Hopefully this will take care of it if there are situations. But again, like I say, if there's individuals out there who are having problems, please reach out to the opposition. We're here to listen. If there's anything we can do, recommendations to government, we'll work with them to make recommendations to the government.

So on that point, you know, I don't have much more to say about it other than I know our critic, my colleagues will have more to say. And when it goes through the right process, if there's questions, clarification we need to get, we'll do that when it goes to the proper channels to have that. So I'm prepared to move adjournment on Bill 95, *The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Amendment Act, 2022*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 97

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carr that **Bill No. 97 — *The Architects Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Pleased to be entering in my remarks on Bill No. 97, *The Architects Amendment Act, 2022*. This Act enables the issuing of architect licences to persons or corporations in trade agreements. And it's also allowing the Government of Saskatchewan to identify trade agreements relevant to the Act.

So when I was reading this, what came to mind was just around the consultation, you know, that needs to happen. We need to reach out to those stakeholders that are going to be impacted to discuss if there's any issues or concerns arising from that. What I'd be interested in is to know what the criteria for identifying relevant trade agreements will be. And when I think about that, I think about the duty-to-consult policy framework, where there was really no clear criteria in place there on who was going to be consulted. So I think about what is it, what is that criteria for identifying relevant trade agreements.

And architecture is a great field, and it's good that Sask Polytech has a wonderful diploma in architectural technologies. So that is good. But one of the things that would be of concern for many folks, and hopefully that this is something that's taken into account, when licences, etc. are being offered, is how much outsourcing is going to happen. So the legislature architecture was outsourced to Montreal architects back in the 1900s. So it's great to see the growth and development of Saskatchewan's own crop of architectures. So I would be curious to know that it's to utilize our own people here in Saskatchewan that have the training, that have the expertise, to be utilized rather than outsourcing such ventures like this.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm prepared to allow this to

move in its . . . proceed in the usual manner. So with that, I am prepared to adjourn debate on Bill 97, *The Architects Amendment Act, 2022*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 98

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 98 — *The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to enter adjourned debate on behalf of the official opposition with respect to Bill 98, *The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency Amendment Act, 2022*.

Mr. Speaker, in this bill we see notable changes around private persons covering the emergency response costs of a wildfire. As the opposition, we do certainly hope that this approach will balance fairness for individuals versus municipal obligations. Mr. Speaker, ideally we would be seeing a focus by this government on seeking not only a punitive approach to wildfire cost management but also one that heavily focuses on a preventative approach.

The minister in her comments noted that the government will not be changing its approach to supporting prevention and mitigation efforts through other services like training and education, which, I mean, I think is quite unfortunate. Mr. Speaker, we know very well that due to the climate crisis, extreme weather events including wildfires will continue to occur with increased regularity and severity. And so as a result, we very much need to see this government stepping up to address that increased risk and liability that the people of our province will be facing more and more.

So, Mr. Speaker, I won't speak too long on this bill in particular, as I know our critic for the bill will be continuing consultations with relevant stakeholders around the impacts of this legislation. And so with that, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 98, *The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency Amendment Act, 2022*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 99

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 99 — *The Emergency***

911 System Amendment Act, 2022 be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to join in in this adjourned debate on Bill No. 99, *The Emergency 911 System Amendment Act, 2022*.

On the outset, this is a bill that looks to modernize 911 services so that they can accept text and video calls and images. I can see how this will continue to help folks in emergency situations. I specifically think of folks who might be within a long range of possibly emergency services. It might be able to help folks in those type situations get advice on what they can provide.

[15:30]

And this bill also moves responsibility of 911 fees from our SaskTel Crown corporation to SPSA [Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency], and that group will be charged with collecting the fees going forward from various telecoms. This bill also gives SPSA the ability to make further improvements to the Sask911 system and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we really welcome these modernization efforts to our Sask911.

I know our critic will be continuing engaging with stakeholders in doing due diligence on the changes, but I just first want to say a big thank you to all the folks who triage 911 calls — I have a personal friend who works in that capacity — as well as the first responders who have been working under, like, just huge immense pressures over the last several years as we lived through an unprecedented pandemic. First responders continue to do an amazing job even as we continue to see huge stresses through our ERs and our health care systems. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just wanted to say a big thank you to those 911 triagers and our first responders.

You know, we all have a story about having to call 911. You know, you hope you never have to do it, but there's that moment when the situation hits and you might be the one who has to dial the number, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I always have dreams where, you know, in an emergency situation, I'm trying to dial 911, and in the dream, you just can't do it. You know, a weird kind of situation, but when the time comes in real life, you know you've got to do it.

And most recently, I was thinking about a time we're having a family gathering in the last, I think it was about two years ago, when my dad was fairly ill. And so we had family coming from all over Canada to see him, and one of my aunts suddenly had an allergic reaction, just totally out of the blue situation, never had allergies in her life. But suddenly amidst the kind of chaos of a family gathering, you know, she was going into anaphylactic shock.

At that moment I was kind of the one person in the room . . . I'm always that person at a table who kind of keeps track of how people are doing. I don't know, it's just something I seem to . . . So I was just looking over and I saw this happening and I was like, something's wrong here. So I quickly jumped into action, called 911, you know, while the family continues its kind of general chaos, and I was like, hey, we've got a situation here.

Thankfully first responders came right away. You know, they were able to get that anaphylaxis under control. They got her on an ambulance, and she got to have a night at the emergency room here in Saskatoon. And it was a little bit before some of our real stressed times, so she was able to get a bed there and spent the night. But you know, it's those situations where you just feel kind of powerless and those people come in. They swoop in and they take care of, and we just have to be so thankful for them.

You know, we've got a bill here that's looking to modernize. You know, some of the concerns we have, we just really hope that SaskTel was collaborated with on this change to the 911 system. You know, we're seeing a change in the way fees are being taken. And we also in 2021 saw those Sask911 fees doubled. You know, of course we need to ensure that these fees are well funded and that we have a modern 911 system. But you know, Mr. Speaker, we continue to see just fees continue to go up and up and up at moments where we've got a government that's just downloading costs to consumers more and more, making life just really expensive for people.

I spoke a bit about, you know, the importance of modernization. You know, with this change I hope that people will feel safer and better covered, have more access to options when they reach out to 911, you know.

So at this time I know, like I said, our critic will be working on stakeholders and seeing how this affects . . . But I'm happy to adjourn debate on Bill No. 99, *The Emergency 911 System Amendment Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 101

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Makowsky that **Bill No. 101 — *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet and speaking on Bill No. 101, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act*.

This is a bill that is focused, one of its priorities is on raising coverage of children from ages 16 to 18 years old and the Act being applicable to children in that age range. And then another important amendment is focused on prioritizing familial and cultural continuity for decisions about Indigenous children in particular, and some amendments to that effect which I'll speak to in a moment.

A further amendment is related to the right of individuals to request information about kids in custody and, by extension, the rights of the ministry to refuse providing such information if it

poses a danger.

I'll maybe start my comments by indicating that, you know, we agree that it's important to recognize the rights of children over the age of 16 and the importance of them being offered that independence to, you know, have a role in decision making about their placement in care, and ensuring that they aren't aged out and that arrangements that are suitable and agreeable to children within that age category of 16 to 18, that their preferences or concerns are heard and taken into account.

I would just say though that the transition period for 18-year-olds is unclear, and should it be cut off on their birthday? We've seen this as a very abrupt lack of a transition. And you know, it has created many issues for youth found in that situation, for example, in the middle of a school year scrambling to find resources to help them complete their schooling upon turning 18. And there continues to be concerns about how that is being addressed and the lack of clarity in the legislation to that effect.

Also it is extremely valuable to be codifying a duty to maintain cultural and community for Indigenous children. You know, the rights of the child and their care being a priority, and then having that codified is certainly something that is welcome and especially since the legal principle is currently under attack in the United States with the *Indian Child Welfare Act* there.

I guess those would be some of my comments at a high level, but this is important legislation with significant implications for children that are entering into custody of Social Services. Certainly it's an area where there's been significant concerns and challenges. And the need for modernization and improvements has certainly been needed for a considerable amount of time, you know, certainly as we see the range of social services and the manner in which that they are provided by this government continue to deteriorate over the past 15 years as these issues have only become more critical and change is all the more necessary.

I do want to also mention our disappointment at the fact that there was no technical briefing provided on this piece of legislation prior to its introduction. Certainly our critic for this area has been very involved in dealing with a number of cases affected by this legislation and would certainly have appreciated the opportunity to receive such a briefing in order that we may fulfill our obligations as opposition critics and caucus in addressing the amendments that are proposed in this bill.

I mean, obviously certainly there is a concerning level of overrepresentation of Indigenous families in care in this province, and it's essential that the amendments are addressing the unique needs and concerns of these families and that we get this legislation right. In order to do that it does require a collaborative approach, consultation that is broad and inclusive of all of the stakeholders that are involved in that care. And that is something that we have seen sorely lacking in the lead-up to this piece of legislation.

I think it's already been mentioned that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action had a number of recommendations that are relevant to this area as well. And we will be looking at this legislation closely to ensure that those Calls to Action are reflected in the amendments that have been put forward here, and also to see whether this bill goes far enough

and whether there have been missed opportunities because certainly it is a critical area of policy impacting on the lives of our most vulnerable populations here in Saskatchewan.

And it's essential that we do service, and appropriately, to these children who are at risk of either aging out upon turning 18 or falling through the cracks, frankly, in this crucial time of their development in life as they transition from youth into young adulthood, and also the concerning lack of services in that area once they do reach the age of 18, and the need for there to be appropriate transition mechanisms in order to ensure that they can move on in their lives with the necessary supports, with connections to their communities, cultural connections, familial connections, and so forth.

We see here in Saskatchewan the concerning increased levels of homelessness, mental health and addictions, barriers to access for social services, barriers to access to educational supports that help these children get a good start to their lives, and so that we avoid those youth from following into, you know, criminality and mental health as a default.

You know, certainly that has been an issue that has been discussed a lot. As His Royal Majesty's Official Opposition, you know, we've been very consistent in terms of our call for measures that are preventative in nature, that prevent and address roots of crime, address misery and addictions and mental health considerations, and certainly that is something we want to make sure that this bill is addressing.

I know that it is kind of, you know, a difficult transition to make at that point, but unless we are setting these children up for success at this stage of life, you know, the risk of falling through the cracks is heightened. And then of course, in order to deliver on government policy objectives to see children transition through that period of care. You know, they need to be adequately supported by our social services agencies. And certainly we've heard a lot about the need to reduce caseloads and the frustration and the inability of social workers within the ministry to provide adequate care, simply because of the crushing burden in which they find themselves under.

[15:45]

So it really is a system that's doomed to failure, quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and really it's more the exception than the rule that these children have a fighting chance of seeing themselves through and into adulthood. We are failing the children in Saskatchewan by turning a blind eye to these considerations, and we see that increasingly become more and more of an issue as we see rates of homelessness and other social indicators on the rise.

Certainly we see it as an improvement to clarify that the best interests of the child is the primary consideration. Certainly we're happy to see that and to have that codified in the legislation and some additional amendments made to that effect in several sections, and also the inclusion of the early involvement of First Nations, including chiefs and other agencies, particularly when it comes to temporary placements.

There has been some concern identified in terms of the time frames, which are relatively short. Three days, I believe, is what

has been identified there. And so, you know, when you have a burdened system and many priorities, there is obviously a risk there that if time frames are too short, that opportunities get missed to undertake that consultation and ensure that the best arrangements are being made for the children. And that is one thing that has been highlighted.

I would also say that, in terms of priority placements, of course it's welcome to see, you know, that that has been identified in the legislation and I believe amended as well to, you know, begin with one's parents, followed by placing a child with a member of the child's extended family, and then finally placing the child in an environment consistent with the child's cultural background. Of course, I'm sure it is obvious to all members in the House here how vitally important that is, that children retain that connection to their community, to their culture. Certainly the mistakes of the past that have resulted in children being removed from their communities — indeed, out of province, out of country — has been a very detrimental approach that's not been in the best interests of the child.

There could be a little more definition there perhaps in terms of recognizing the important role that grandparents play in terms of that extended family. That has not been something that is clear in the legislation or, to that matter, other pre-existing relationships and acknowledgement of that broader family network. And important roles that are played with any family environment obviously need to be considered, and we want to make sure that the legislation is consistent with that.

Further to that of course is also the importance of keeping siblings together. And that is one area that this legislation is silent on. Certainly, you know, it's always challenging at times to accommodate all these needs. But certainly when we're dealing with children who are entering into care and disconnected from their parents, the need for children to stay together is vitally important and should be upheld as a priority as well.

Certainly I can attest to the importance that these children have, you know, a connection to their family, that they know that they're loved and supported in order so that they can make it through what is a very tumultuous time in their lives. Certainly when we're talking about 16- and 17-year-olds this is already . . . We're dealing with adolescents. This is a very difficult life stage, you know, as children are grappling with their identity and the importance of upholding their human rights. They could be also questioning in terms of their sexual orientation, their gender orientation, their identity, and those kind of considerations are also important. I don't believe this legislation has addressed explicitly that. Certainly it is implicit because our human rights legislation applies in all cases and all matters. But still it is something that I did not see in reviewing this legislation.

So it's my understanding that section 68, there have been some changes there in terms of dealing with the case of aging out. And as I've said, we are happy to see that that issue has been addressed in the legislation and definitely that those supports are necessary.

The next thing I want to turn to is the issue of confidentiality that is in section 74. I know I've certainly had casework in my constituency of challenges around receiving information and perception and concern that these provisions have the effect of

essentially protecting the ministry from scrutiny as opposed to providing children and families with information that they are looking for to be able to reconnect with family members and understand the decision making — so, you know, a lack of transparency. And even now with historic cases that have come forward and the ability of the ministry to essentially, without really any detailed justification, say, well, we can't share that information with you. And I think that really does a disservice to families who are trying to reconnect with family members and understand the reasons why decisions have been made in terms of where children have been placed and the consequences of that that have led to, you know, disconnections in the family.

So certainly we will be looking to ensure that there is a fair balance there in both protecting the rights of the individual and their family members to ensure that justice is served to all of those in question.

With that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll wrap up my comments. That's all that I wanted to touch on at this time. It's been a great pleasure here to provide comment on this important piece of legislation. I know most certainly that our critic will be going through this with a fine-tooth comb based on their depth and experience and consultation with vital stakeholders. And with that, I will adjourn debate on Bill No. 101. I'll move adjournment. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 102

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 102 — *The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act, 2022/Loi modificative de 2022 sur les questions constitutionnelles*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to join in on the adjourned debate for Bill No. 102. I firstly just want to thank our Justice critic for her work on engaging stakeholders in regards to this legislative amendment.

Some notable changes that we're seeing in this legislation. One is that it moves to ensure that the Attorney General is served notice of challenge to any law pertaining to the human rights code, not just the Constitution. And we also see some progressive housekeeping by removing "he" or "she" pronouns throughout the document, which is very welcome and continues to ensure that our legislation is a reflection of our modern time.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to stand in the way of important modernization like we're seeing here, but I do have a few thoughts in regards to this legislation to put on record. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very important for the Attorney General to stay up to date when there are concerns made that involve the

human rights code.

You know, we continue to see the human rights code in Saskatchewan challenged. We continue to see human rights challenged in North America and around the world, and we've seen so clearly how, you know, human rights can be altered at the whim of legislators.

Primarily we've been seeing this a lot in our neighbours to the south. You know, lately we've been seeing a lot of legislation being presented limiting or outright banning abortion access. We see bills before legislatures, don't-say-gay bills being put forward. All this legislation, it just continues to see an attack on their human rights.

I read a tweet the other day wherein the individual lamented the emotional labour it takes to sit through mid-term election after mid-term election, where your fundamental human rights could be called into question by the results. So these are issues that our neighbours to the south are facing, but it's something that we should be watchful of. Needless to say, we still have a lot of work to do.

As we discuss the human rights code and changes that we're seeing here, I can't help to think that we've seen these attacks on our human rights. We have a government with a poor track record on human rights complaints as we've seen most recently. We've been hearing about terrible allegations of abuse in some private Christian independent schools.

And while this Act is supposed to make our justice system run more smoothly, I worry about efficiency in this very important issue, you know, because we continue to see an evasive government when it comes to accountability on those human rights codes in the place of schools and colleges, as we've seen so recently. You know, we desperately hope that by keeping the Attorney General in the loop, that this government will be able to respond to those complaints and challenges to the human rights code violations with more efficiency.

Like I said, our Justice critic will keep working with stakeholders in ensuring this modernization legislation continues to work for people. As the official opposition, we will continue to ensure concerns of human rights violations will continue to be raised in this House.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in conclusion of my remarks, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 102.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 103

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Makowsky that **Bill No. 103 — *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act*** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from

Saskatoon University.

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to enter adjourned debate on behalf of the official opposition with respect to Bill 103, the accessible Act, 2022. Mr. Speaker, this is a new bill which will ensure that the Government of Saskatchewan, the public sector, and prescribed persons must create accessibility plans that will remove and prevent barriers for those with disabilities.

The bill will also create a Saskatchewan accessibility office to advise the minister on legislation and compliance, as well as to increase public awareness and education around this new legislation. The bill further creates an accessibility advisory committee to advise the minister on standards, education, and administration of the Act.

[16:00]

Within this section, Mr. Speaker, it's good to see the requirement for significant representation on the advisory committee by people with disabilities or by those who work with organizations supporting people with disabilities. I think that's really important and it's good to see that recognized here and included.

Another notable aspect of the bill is the recognition of sign language as an official language. And my colleague, the member for Regina Douglas Park, had remarked on the guests who were here for the introduction of this legislation and how impactful and moving it was for them to see that inclusion. We do know that this is highly meaningful for many people in our province and so we applaud that recognition.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition is certainly in support of legislation that will increase accessibility and inclusiveness for Saskatchewan people and so we're pleased to see this type of bill being brought forward by the government. Our lead critic will be working closely with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the bill will adequately reflect and meet all of their needs in terms of reducing barriers to participating in our province and our society. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will move that we adjourn debate on Bill 103, the accessible Act, 2022.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. The Assembly now stands adjourned till 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:02.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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Premier
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
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Minister Responsible for Innovation
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Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
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Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Telecommunications
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Saskatchewan Water Corporation
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