



THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

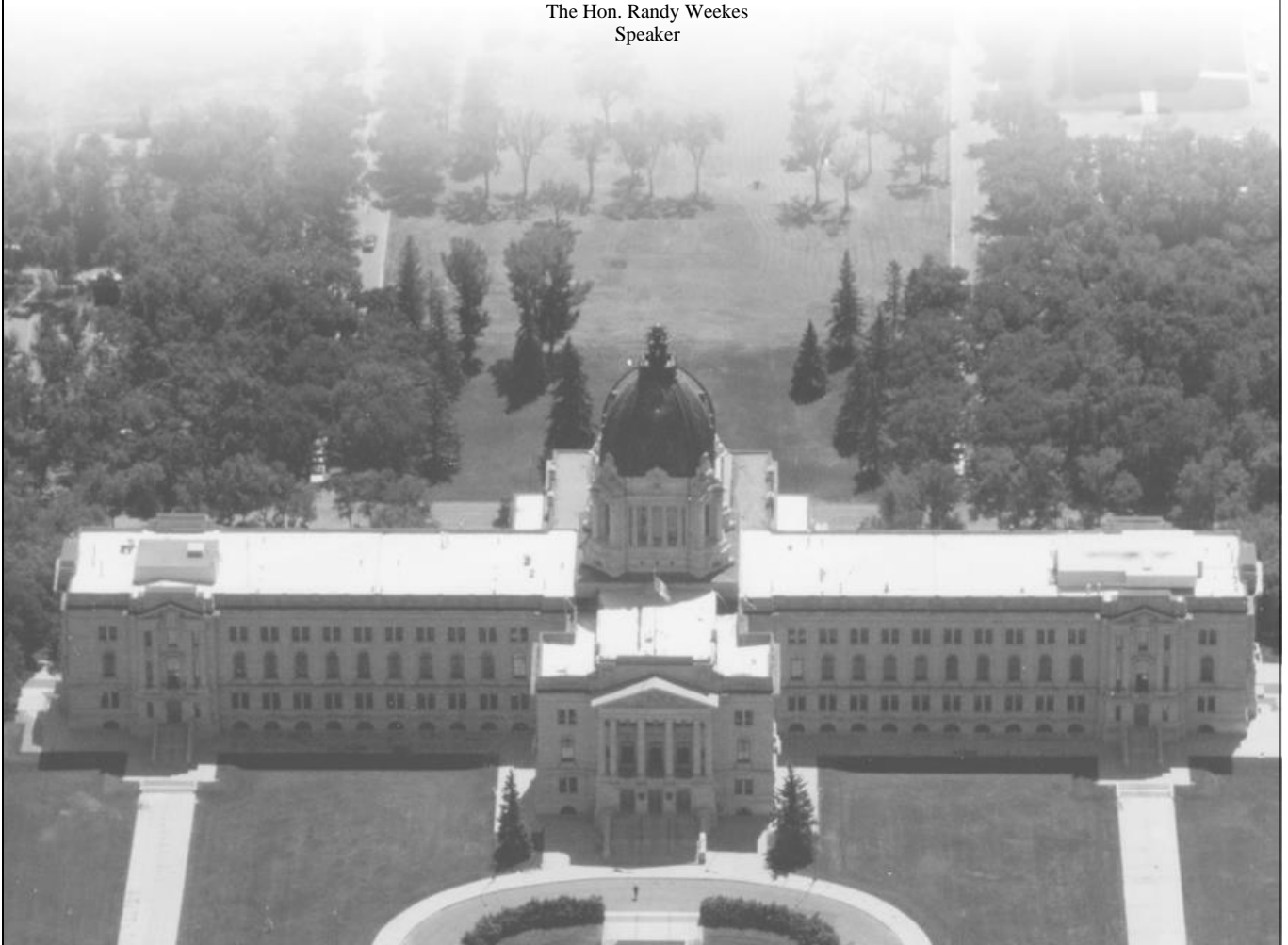
of the

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)

Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)

Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)

Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

Carr, Hon. Lori — Estevan (SP)

Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)

Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP)

Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)

Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

Domotor, Ryan — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)

Duncan, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)

Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)

Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)

Francis, Ken — Kindersley (SP)

Friesen, Marv — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP)

Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP)

Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP)

Hargrave, Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)

Harbauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)

Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)

Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)

Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)

Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)

Kaeding, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)

Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)

Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP)

Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)

Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

McLeod, Hon. Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)

McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)

Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)

Meyers, Derek — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)

Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)

Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)

Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)

Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)

Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP)

Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)

Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)

Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

Skoropad, Hon. Dana — Arm River (SP)

Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)

Stewart, Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)

Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)

Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)

Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)

Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)

Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Coronation Park

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 47; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12;

Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1; Vacant — 1

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Iris Lang

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

Deputy Clerk — Kathy Burianyk

Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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Legislative Assembly are available
within hours after each sitting.

<https://www.legassembly.sk.ca/Calendar>

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker: — Yesterday, March 8th, 2023, the Opposition House Leader raised a point of order regarding a comment made by the Minister of Finance during question period where the Minister of Finance used the term “alternative facts.” The Opposition House Leader identified that term as one I had deemed unparliamentary in my ruling that day. I have taken it under advisement and am now prepared to rule on the matter.

In dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner, and intention of the member speaking. Terms such as “alternative facts,” “fake news,” “misinformation,” and “misrepresenting” are now used in political speech and are widely recognized as labels that insinuate misrepresentation of the truth.

Members are aware that accusing one another of being purposely untruthful is unparliamentary. I caution all members going forward to be respectful when referring to other members. Terms such as “alternative facts,” “misinformation,” and any other terms that call into question the integrity of members will be ruled as unparliamentary.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it is my pleasure this morning to introduce a group of 39 grade 8 students from Lindale School in Moose Jaw. They’re seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, together with their teacher, Ivy Sheward, and Kathy MacFarlane.

Mr. Speaker, it’s always a pleasure when we have students who join us in the gallery, and it’s an extra special day for me because a good number of those students have the misfortune of calling me their hockey coach. So I look forward to meeting with all of those students and fielding their difficult questions after session. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I would also like to welcome Ivy Sheward and her class. Ivy was a participant in the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Institute on Parliamentary Democracy in 2022. She was selected to be a member of the steering committee, beginning this year. The steering committee works with my office, Social Studies Saskatchewan, and the Ministry of Education to host the SSTI [Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers’ Institute on Parliamentary Democracy] each year. SSTI will take place from April 29th to May 3rd. Thank you, Ivy, for your dedication to the SSTI program. Please join me in welcoming Ms. Sheward and her students to the Legislative Assembly.

I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I’d like to introduce 44 students seated in the east gallery from École du Parc school, a school located in my constituency. They’re accompanied by their teachers today, Megan Beach, Paraclet Koubemba, Viviane Koko, and Yougo Makemtie. Very excited to have them here with us this morning and looking forward to having some conversations answering some, I’m sure, just as tough questions as the member from Moose Jaw will be receiving later today as well. Thank you so much for being here, and I’d ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I’d like to join with the member from Moose Jaw North in welcoming the school group from Moose Jaw today. I’d like to actually just single out one of the students in particular, a grade 8 student, Hunter. I have the distinct privilege of working with Hunter’s dad every day in my office here at the legislature. And I was going to say, I think Hunter is better dressed than his dad today although I’ll let them sort that out at home tonight. So I’d ask all members to join me in welcoming Hunter and his whole class to their legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of the Legislative Assembly, it is my pleasure to introduce my younger brother Lance Domotor sitting in your gallery today. It’s been three years since his last trip to Canada, Mr. Speaker, so we’ve been doing a little catching up, if you will, before he leaves again later this month.

My brother’s been living in Japan and teaching English as a second language for over 24 years now to individuals who are either furthering their careers or to those who plan on advancing their studies and will be attending a university abroad. Mr. Speaker, I know the perseverance and enthusiasm that this man has towards his vocation, and I have to commend him on his dedication and devotion to ensuring his students are well prepared for their next chapter in life. He’s an asset to his profession and a leader in his field. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that my colleagues join me in welcoming him to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Mr. Bonk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you, I’d like to introduce two guests sitting in your gallery. First Joel Peterson. He heads up the division here in Saskatchewan for his firm and he’s just been a great friend to all of us here. And he advocates very well on behalf of the companies and organizations that he represents here in Saskatchewan.

Secondly I’d like to introduce someone who needs no introduction, Dan D’Autremont, who filled your seat previously here in the legislature. And we’d like to thank him for his 137 years of service. I’m not sure if that number is right, but it was a

long, long time.

But I'd like to ask all members of the Assembly to help me welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join with my friend, the member from Moosomin, to welcome Dan D'Autremont, the long-serving member from Cannington to his Assembly, a Speaker in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

I have to say I always prefer having D'Autremont up here than when he was down here, Mr. Speaker, in the debate because he was certainly a fierce political debater. He cared for his province. We share a love of hunting, Mr. Speaker — mine's more in Saskatchewan, his a little more abroad at times — but I like hearing the stories.

It's also a pleasure to welcome Joel Peterson to his Assembly, who I know represents various interests and businesses through Hill+Knowlton. It's a pleasure to have both of these people here in their Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, the undersigned residents of 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 right of the province of Saskatchewan and implement policies those are detrimental to our province's economic well-being; that the commitment and the action of the federal government have made the control of Saskatchewan resources rights unclear; that an unsupportive federal government will continue to impede Saskatchewan's potential to play a global role in providing resources to the world market.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by the residents of Paradise Hill, St. Walburg, Turtleford, Frenchman Butte. I do so present. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be presenting the following petition. The folks who signed this petition wish to bring to your attention: survivors of both Ile-a-la-Crosse and Timber Bay boarding schools have been denied the Indian residential school settlements that other sites received; and this province has operated those schools from 1952 to 1994;

and Ile-a-la-Crosse school operated in 1917 to 1995; these folks haven't received their information when it comes to their documents.

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 recognize the Ile-a-la-Crosse and Timber Bay schools as provincially run schools, release the records of these schools, offer the students a formal apology, and compensate the survivors.

The folks who signed this petition reside in Loon Lake and Duck Lake. I do so present.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to cancel its plans to end its relationship with Luther Heights in Saskatoon.

Thus the undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: the Department of Social Services is cancelling the government subsidy for 50 apartments in Luther Heights, a seniors' residence in Saskatoon; this building contains 120 units providing vital housing for seniors; the decision to eliminate these subsidies reduces the supply of affordable housing to seniors on fixed incomes and creates a burden and stress on us all.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't an isolated incident. Seniors in my riding and across Saskatchewan are being forced to choose between paying more or leaving their homes and communities. This is not how seniors, who have contributed so much to our country, should be treated. We urge the government to reconsider and renew their partnership with Luther Heights.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully call on the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to urge the Government of Saskatchewan to reverse the decision to eliminate subsidized housing and restore funding for the 50 units affected at Luther Heights.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatchewan Rivers Constituents Awarded Platinum Jubilee Medal

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand before you as leader of the Saskatchewan United Party. Like many of my colleagues in the Assembly, I've had the great privilege to host a ceremony in which 41 deserving recipients of the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal were recognized.

We were so very honoured to have His Honour, the governor of Saskatchewan, Russ Mirasty and Her Honour Donna Mirasty present the medals.

For most, Queen Elizabeth II was the only monarch they have ever known and this medal celebrating 70 years is truly a once-in-a-lifetime honour. During her reign, each recipient made significant contributions in their communities and the province of Saskatchewan. Congratulations to each of these very deserving recipients of the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal. Thank you also to the many friends and family who came out to make this a very special day for each and every one of them.

From the diverse categories of agriculture to business and commerce, from protective services to volunteer services, arts, and education, I thank you all for your service to this great province. You all deserve our admiration and gratitude. Well done, Saskatchewan Rivers constituents. I look forward to more of your achievements in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Former Gang Members Unite to Serve Their Community

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to be on my feet today to recognize a group that was founded in 2007 when former gang members, many recently incarcerated, decided they wanted a better life for their Indigenous brothers and sisters trying to break the cycle of crime and addiction. They turned instead to the Seven Grandfather Teachings: courage, honesty, humility, truth, wisdom, love, and respect.

[10:15]

To the uninitiated, members may appear to be a gang or a motorcycle club; however the Crazy Indians Brotherhood mission is to flip a colonial stereotype on its head and serve their community. They are modern warriors for the next generation of young men and women, Mr. Speaker. They have since grown into an international non-profit expanding across Canada with thousands of members and supporters of all ages and backgrounds. In fact, my long-time neighbour John has been involved in both Treaty 4 and 6 chapters, and Kaitlyn Stadnyk, my practicum student here from U of R [University of Regina] who's here with us today, is a proud member.

Mr. Speaker, Indigenous offenders account for nearly 75 to 80 per cent of the custodial population in Saskatchewan despite representing only 17 per cent of Saskatchewan people — shameful statistics. The CIB [Crazy Indians Brotherhood] self-funded clothing and toy drives, food donations, and deep involvement in the community can't help but be noticed, Mr. Speaker, such as last week when they served as security for the First Nation University Students' Association annual round dance.

With that, I'd invite all members to join me in thanking the Crazy Indians Brotherhood for their significant and ongoing contributions to Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Battlefords North Stars Player Scores 50th Goal

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Battlefords are no stranger to athletic prowess. From Reuben Mayes to Andrew Albers to Colby Cave, we've had our fair share of local sports heroes. But there's a new star in town, a North Star in fact.

Mr. Speaker, on February 24th, Kian Bell of the Battlefords North Stars scored his 50th goal of this SJHL [Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League] season. Doing that, he became only the fifth player since the year 2000 to score 50 goals in one SJHL season. Now, Mr. Speaker, I've seen Kian play several times this year and he's certainly a special player, but he also comes from a pretty notable hockey family. The last North Star to score 50 goals in one season was his uncle, Martin Smith. And Kian's own mother, Fiona, had a distinguished hockey career of her own, including representing Canada at the 1998 Olympic Games in Nagano.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that Kian and the rest of the North Stars, they're not done yet. They have had an incredible season so far with only five losses in regulation. Now the playoffs are right around the corner, and I know the boys are ready to hopefully bring a championship back home to The Battlefords.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Kian on his 50-goal season and wishing the Battlefords North Stars all the best in the playoffs. Thank you.

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

Saskatoon Celebrates Black History Month Gala

Mr. Love: — On February 28th I was honoured to join with members of the African-Canadian community at the first ever Black History Month gala in Saskatoon organized by Truly Alive Youth and Family Foundation. Carol LaFayette-Boyd, the executive director of the Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum, delivered a fascinating speech on local black history in Saskatchewan. Aniekan Udofia, a sub-lieutenant with the Canadian navy reserve, spoke about black women breaking barriers. And the incomparable Khodi Dill, a dedicated writer, poet, and teacher, shared two spoken word poems that brought the audience to our feet.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I cannot do justice to this event without also noting that there was music and dancing, and at one point in the evening the executive director, Anthony Olusola, called you and I up to dance in front of the crowd. Now typically I'm not one to dance in public, certainly not with an entire room of people just watching me shake uncomfortably. But, Mr. Speaker, I've got to say that sharing the dance floor with you made me a little less self-conscious. And I was also thankful that I had my beautiful wife, Emma, there to laugh at the both of us.

Thank you and congratulations to Anthony and Truly Alive Youth and Family Foundation for an incredible month celebrating the richness of black history and excellence in Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Yorkton Snowarama Fundraises for Camp Easter Seal

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, recently I was honoured to attend the 46th Easter Seals Snowarama awards banquet in Yorkton. The daytime ride is largely due to the hard work of the Yorkton Sno-Riders, this year celebrating 33 years. This year Snowarama raised 196,000 for Camp Easter Seal, a portion raised by campers through their Bowlarama, and 67,000 US [United States] raised by the Snowarama Desert Chapter wintering in Arizona. By evening end, additional fundraising activities totalled well over 200,000.

These funds go towards helping young people with special abilities receive services and programming through SaskAbilities. The primary programs that Snowarama supports are Camp Easter Seal, Summer Fun, and Adaptive Technology Services. Camp Easter Seal celebrated 67 seasons of operation this past summer. The camp provides a safe, fun, and barrier-free experience to all campers as they develop skills and relationships that will last their entire lives.

Summer Fun is aimed at fostering community inclusion, encouraging social development, and increasing self-confidence in participants. Adaptive Technology Services is dedicated to using tech to create opportunities and increase independence for campers. Programs like this help make Saskatchewan one of the best places in Canada for people with special abilities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking the Snowarama committee, the volunteers, participants, sponsors, and donors for their efforts in making the 46th Snowarama a success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognizing Saskatoon Entrepreneur

Mr. Friesen: — Today I want to talk about an entrepreneur in Saskatoon that came to Canada in 1977 with only \$8 in his pocket. A decade later, him and his wife, Sonja, started their first company in the basement of their house. Today they manage over 300 people around the world, and it all started in Saskatoon.

Recently I, the Minister of Health, the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood had the opportunity to tour the facility. Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about Bob Behari. And if you ask him how he did it he says this, and I quote, "work hard, work smart, and work honest."

Mr. Speaker, EnviroWay has been manufacturing green chemistry, refilling products, and harnessing biological solutions to wastewater in Saskatoon since 1987. As a travelling salesperson, he saw the lack of support for First Nation communities with their janitorial products and frequent overstocking. Bob knew he could do better.

What started off as organizing janitorial closets in remote and rural Saskatchewan, training caretaking staff late into the evening, and testing new formulas in his old bathtub, has grown into one of the most innovative manufacturers with deep roots and relationships here in the province. Bob's vision is to build our local economy, improve our quality of life, promote green

chemistry, reduce carbon emissions through innovation, and reduce single-use plastics in the chemical industry.

I would ask all members to join me and thank Bob for his contribution to Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Agri-Food Industry Contributes to Export Growth

Mr. Bonk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year, our province opened several trade offices around the world along with one in Mexico. And I'm proud to announce that the value of Saskatchewan's exports to Mexico reached over \$1 billion for the first time ever.

Mr. Speaker, 97 per cent of our exports to Mexico were agri-food products, with canola oil, canola seed, and non-durum wheat making up the top three. Canola seed alone accounted for over half of that with a total value of \$557 million. With the Ministry of Trade and Export Development looking to open a new trade office in Germany, we can expect the value and range of our exports to continue to increase.

In fact our exports are up 56 per cent in the last year alone. That's on top of a 41 per cent increase in the year prior. With the world's economy continuing to recover, Saskatchewan stands poised to deliver the sustainable food, fuel, and fertilizer that the world needs. Mr. Speaker, having the strongest export economy in Canada along with the strongest economy in Canada means more jobs, more opportunities, and growth that works for everyone.

I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in thanking our agri-food industry for their hard work in producing the world's most sustainable products. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Employment and the Provincial Economy

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a Premier who is failing to deliver on the economy. He has the worst economic record in Canada and the worst jobs record in the country.

Mr. Speaker, the Trade and Export Development minister has tried to blame a labour shortage for his government's record, but they don't accept any responsibility for the fact that years of cuts and underfunding in schools and universities are to blame.

Why won't this tired and out-of-touch government accept any responsibility for their choices that have left us with the worst jobs record in the country?

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is the NDP every day in the House this week they've stood on their feet trying to criticize the economy, trying

to convince people that we have the worst economy in the country. Mr. Speaker, we do not. Conference Board of Canada, all the major banks, Mr. Speaker, are speaking to the fact that we have the strongest economic forecast — both this year and next — in the nation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to a Gormley broadcast this week when the Leader of the Opposition was talking to John about jobs, as the member opposite just raised. It was ironic, Mr. Speaker. The host pointed this out to the Leader of the Opposition: on one hand they're saying you're not creating enough jobs. On the other hand they're saying you don't have enough people to fill the jobs. You can't have it both ways, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Post-Secondary Education

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I hope this is a government that can walk and chew gum at the same time, but it doesn't seem like they're capable of either by itself. And the fact of the matter, for this government's understanding: this Premier does have the worst jobs record in Canada, and he is failing to deliver for people. We need thousands of skilled workers in our health care system, in our natural resources sector, and in new sectors like renewables and technology, but that won't happen without strong public education and properly funded universities to get people the skills and training they need to land a good job.

What doesn't this government understand? Don't they realize that any shortage of workers today is a direct result of their failure to support public education and our universities?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the member's been, Mr. Speaker. A number of years ago, Mr. Speaker, we signed a historic funding agreement with our post-secondary institutions to provide stable and predictable funding to our institutions, Mr. Speaker, all of which at the time spoke highly of the work that was done by the government, by my good friend the member from Gardiner Park who shepherded that agreement through, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we understand the importance of post-secondary education to the economy, Mr. Speaker. That's why we continue to invest in post-secondary education and support the institutions that are going to provide the workers, Mr. Speaker, to continue to support this economy into the future.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, classic Sask Party move. Nothing to see here. Everything is fine. This tired and out-of-touch government has spent the last 15 years running our public institutions into the ground. They've scrapped and sold off four of our Crowns. They've racked up record debt at SaskPower, running it into deficit for the first time; killed the NORTEP [northern teacher education program] program after the Premier

committed to funding it, and now there are reports of deep cuts at the University of Regina as a result, a direct result, of this government's choices.

With a record like that, why should Saskatchewan people trust this Sask Party government with any of our public institutions?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I kind of wish that the member opposite would have listened to my last answer, Mr. Speaker. In the last year, \$116 million has been provided to the University of Regina, Mr. Speaker, including additional funding to our post-secondary institutions in the first two years of our funding agreement, Mr. Speaker, to allow those institutions to make strategic investments to ensure their financial viability going into the future.

Mr. Speaker, all our post-secondary institutions spoke highly and favourably about the work that was done to create a situation where we had stable and predictable funding for our post-secondary institutions, something that never happened before, certainly something that never happened when those people had the privilege of forming government, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to continue to support our post-secondary sector, Mr. Speaker, because again we know how vitally important they are to the future of this province and the future of our economy.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, stable underfunding is still underfunding. That's what I would say in response to the minister.

Mr. Speaker, in your gallery we have Britt Hall here with us today, the president of University of Regina's Faculty Association. She's here today because of the dire situation facing the U of R. Deep cuts are on the table, people are worried, and there's no way to keep offering high-quality programs while slashing resources and supports. These cuts put the long-term viability of the University of Regina at great risk.

Will the minister meet with Britt, hear her concerns, and provide the funding needed to stop these damaging cuts at the U of R?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I'm more than happy to meet with representatives from the University of Regina after question period, Mr. Speaker. I tell the member opposite that I spend a considerable amount of time meeting with stakeholders across the sector, including executive at the University of Regina, the students' union at the University of Regina, and the University of Saskatchewan and Sask Polytech, Mr. Speaker.

I spend a significant amount of time having these conversations, understanding where the challenges are in our post-secondary institutions because again, Mr. Speaker, we understand the importance of this sector to the future of this province. So yes, I will certainly meet with these representatives after question

period.

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

[10:30]

Ms. Bowes: — Yeah, Mr. Speaker, my response to that minister back would be that conversations need to lead to action for people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, the U of R is crucial for Regina, and it's important for people across southern Saskatchewan. Students need and deserve access to affordable, accessible education so that they can acquire the skills they need to have bright futures in our province.

But the fact is this government slashed university funding in 2017, and they flatlined funding ever since. Those are the facts. Britt Hall told the *Leader-Post* that we need to see some of these surplus dollars that the government is sitting on invested in post-secondary. So will the minister commit to that today?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, what I will commit to, Mr. Speaker, what I will commit to is having ongoing conversations with our post-secondary sectors to make sure that we're properly supporting them.

As I mentioned earlier, a four-year funding agreement, a historic funding agreement which was endorsed by all our post-secondary institutions, Mr. Speaker, which provided additional funding for strategic investments so as to ensure the financial stability and viability of our institutions going into the future, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I had a conversation with President Keshen just yesterday. He's fully committed to continuing to work with his administrative team to ensure the viability of his institution, Mr. Speaker. He's committed that there'll be no cuts to programs, Mr. Speaker. And he's committed to continuing to work with his executive to ensure that the financial position of the University of Saskatchewan is stable going into the future. But I'll certainly continue to have the conversations with those in our sector, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that happens.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Again, Mr. Speaker, conversations need to lead to action. Conversations are meaningless to people when we have cuts on the table, when we have record high tuition for students in this province. So do more than conversations.

This government's failure to support public education in our universities is a direct cause of this Premier's worst-in-the-nation economic record. We need more bright, skilled young people to be graduating from our universities and colleges, not less. We need a government that looks at education as an investment, not a cost.

Why does this government not realize that we need strong universities if we're ever going to have a strong economy in this province?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, here's the reality. The University of Regina received \$116 million in operating funds this year alone, including \$6.5 million for preventative maintenance, renewal; an additional \$430,000 for the seat expansion, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 15 years the Government of Saskatchewan has provided the University of Regina with \$1.7 billion worth of funding, Mr. Speaker. So for that member to stand up to say that this government isn't committed to continuing to support post-secondary education... understanding the importance of this sector to the future of our economy and the growth plan, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll continue to have conversations. Certainly we don't have the conversations without having some idea of where those conversations are going to lead us. It's important to have the conversations and the dialogue, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to continue to do that.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, I will say it again: chronic underfunding from this government. Yes, they gave an MOU [memorandum of understanding] for stable funding. Of course the institutions want that. Of course they are happy about stable funding. But underfunding is the problem, and stable funding needs to be accompanied with appropriate dollars, appropriate dollars, not zero per cent increases during an inflationary crisis.

Mr. Speaker, Britt Hall and the staff at the U of R want the best for their students. They want what's best for our province. Deep cuts during a time of windfall profits for this government don't make any sense, and cuts would make this Premier, his job record, even worse, believe it or not. Instead this government needs to listen. They need to ensure supports are in place to stop these damaging cuts, cuts that will put the viability of the U of R into question and into peril.

So will the Sask Party work with the U of R to take these cuts off the table? Yes or no? To the minister.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, President Keshen has said that our purpose is not to eliminate any programming, emphasizing that no one area or department is going to be targeted, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our universities are autonomous institutions. We know that President Keshen and his leadership team and the board of governors are going to make the right decisions and the best decisions for their institution, recognizing — and I've said this every answer — the importance of this sector to the

economy, to the future of this province, and the future of the growth plan, Mr. Speaker.

We'll continue to work with the universities, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to work with all our post-secondary partners to ensure that we're producing the students, producing the workers that our economy is going to need to take us into the next few years. My conversations with the leadership in post-secondary education will continue, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we continue to do the right thing for this sector, the right thing for our economy, and the right thing for this province.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. As my colleague said, the U of R is important for students all across Saskatchewan. It's particularly important for First Nation and Métis people in our province. It's the home of the First Nations University of Saskatchewan. First Nation and Métis students from across Saskatchewan make their way to Regina every fall to study and get an education. It's an important part of reconciliation. Does the minister realize that cuts to staff and programs at the U of R will hurt First Nations and Métis students in our province?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in my dialogue with leaders in our post-secondary sector, that certainly includes the leadership over at the First Nations University of Canada, Mr. Speaker. We spent a considerable amount of time having those conversations, having those discussions because we know how important it is to ensure that we provide the support to First Nations students that are attending that institution, and in fact First Nations students that are attending all our post-secondary institutions. Mr. Speaker, it's a topic that comes up in my conversations with the presidents of the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, Sask Polytechnic, and First Nations University of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

We'll continue to work with the leadership in our post-secondary sector to make sure that we're providing the right supports to the students, whether they're at the First Nations University of Canada, whether they're at the U of R, the University of Saskatchewan, or Sask Polytech.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Mr. Speaker, the U of R is essential for First Nations and Métis students who want to get a good education and get a good job. This is a government that loves to pay lip service to economic reconciliation. First Nations and Métis students contribute to our economy, and they rely on programs and education at the U of R. Making cuts doesn't make any sense. How can First Nations and Métis students be part of economic reconciliation when we see deep cuts to staff and programs that First Nations and Métis students rely on?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in one of my earlier answers, the University of Regina, Dr. Keshen has indicated that there won't be any cuts to any programs, Mr. Speaker. We're confident that he'll be able to carry that off in his ongoing conversations around budget, Mr. Speaker.

But let me just say this in terms of our commitment to First Nations education, Mr. Speaker. We just reinvigorated our Dene teacher education expansion, Mr. Speaker, which is going to provide educational opportunities for Dene teacher . . . for Dene language speaking up in the Clearwater area, up in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We're very, very pleased with the work that's been done by the university, by the First Nations University of Saskatchewan to continue to support that program, Mr. Speaker, many, many other First Nations teachers' programs in northern Saskatchewan because we know how important that is to support those programs, to support northern Saskatchewan, and ensure that we have the right quality of teachers in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We'll continue to support the First Nations University of Canada, Mr. Speaker. And I can tell you this, Mr. Speaker: they were a part of the four-year funding agreement.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this government's sitting on record windfall revenues, but they're forcing students to pick up the tab for years, Mr. Speaker. At the U of R, funding was slashed by the province in 2017. It's flatlined ever since and it's forced cuts. Meanwhile the cost of tuition has skyrocketed year after year, driving up the cost of living for students and families and driving students out of their studies because they can't afford to go to school.

Why is this government forcing students to pay the price for this government's failure to invest in our universities?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many times I have to tell the opposition through my answers about the historic funding agreement that we have with our post-secondary institutions, Mr. Speaker — an agreement that caps tuitions across our post-secondary sector for the benefit of students, Mr. Speaker.

Again, we'll continue to have our dialogue with our institutions to make sure that we're providing the right supports to our institutions because we understand, Mr. Speaker, as I've said a number of times today, how important our post-secondary sector is to the people of Saskatchewan, to the economy, and the future of this great province.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, deep cuts that will cause tuition hikes during a generational cost-of-living challenge will

drive students away from education, out of education, away from the pursuit of studies — an absolute barrier for many. This hurts students. It hurts our labour force that's already been damaged by this government. It hurts our economy. It threatens the viability of the U of R, whose economic impact in this city and southern Saskatchewan is huge.

Why can't this tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government wake up to the reality that deep cuts at the U of R will only make this Premier's worst-in-the-nation economic record worse?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, let me tell you what we've done in terms of student supports. Since 2007-2008 we've invested over \$12 billion in post-secondary institutions and in student supports, Mr. Speaker, student supports making up \$1.4 billion of that total.

And as I mentioned before, Mr. Speaker, the historic four-year funding agreement that we have with our post-secondary institutions caps tuition, which is important for our students so that they can make sure that they can afford the tuition that's being paid . . . [inaudible] . . . their work, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, multiple programs to help students during and after their studies: the graduation retention program — the only program of its kind in the country, Mr. Speaker — to ensure that our students can stay and work in Saskatchewan after they graduate. We have a number of other programs with respect to student loans, student loan forgiveness, Mr. Speaker, a multitude of programs which support our students to ensure that they get the best quality education right here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Trade Mission to India

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While the Premier was away on a trip to India, people at home were trying to figure out how to pay increasing costs: power, energy, food, transportation, and housing. Their Premier even took along Stephen Harper, who as a consultant, comes at a price. Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: why was it necessary to take an expensive out-of-province consultant to India? And what did it cost Saskatchewan people to take Mr. Harper on that trip? Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, we have a trading economy in this province. We have all types of industries that count on it: our agriculture industry, our oil and gas industry, our mining industry, Mr. Speaker. It's important that we're visible to our major customers, Mr. Speaker. India is a major customer. It's important that we reach out to them.

Mr. Speaker, I just came back from a conference, PDAC, the Prospectors and Developers Association, in Toronto. It's the mining industry. Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity for a

breakfast round table with many companies that are doing business in Saskatchewan. That very trip by the Premier was brought up, and they were praising it. They talked about how important it is that our Premier and our cabinet ministers are out, around the world and around the country, talking to our customers, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding from the Federal Government

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As leader of the Saskatchewan United Party, I'm interested in *The Saskatchewan First Act*, which is a step in the right direction. However, Mr. Speaker, while the Premier says he's working for Saskatchewan sovereignty, he is accepting money hand over hand over fist from the federal government for almost every new program he announces on health care, on daycare, on education, trade and export, and even agriculture. This federal . . . creeps into provincial jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, in politics we all know the golden rule — that is, whoever has the gold makes the rules. To the Premier: why is the government choosing to be more and more dependent on Ottawa's money and the strings attached to it? Thank you.

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, we do agree and we have been very vocal that in programs and different issues where we can work with Ottawa, we will work with Ottawa. If the policies or the decisions are harmful for Saskatchewan, we're going to stand up for Saskatchewan.

In the case of the child care dollars, I know the member had mentioned it, we feel that is dollars well spent here in Saskatchewan, and we are going to work with Ottawa on that deal and have indeed signed a deal.

But I do find it very strange that there seems to be a perception that Ottawa has this magic money that isn't Saskatchewan money. This is Saskatchewan money. There's only one taxpayer. Our citizens in this province are paying very high federal tax, and we will work with Ottawa where we can to ensure that those tax dollars come back to our citizens who have paid it.

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

Members' Salaries and Affordability

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As leader of the Saskatchewan United Party, I hear every day from Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan people who are facing unprecedented financial hardships this year. Families are cutting back on food to pay for heat and power. They're having to decide to eat or to stay warm. Businesses are struggling or going out of business because of increasing costs that they cannot control.

Mr. Speaker, it hardly seems fair that we in the House have the

luxury of indexed, automatic pay raises while our friends and neighbours out in our constituencies are seeing their life savings and dreams disappear.

Mr. Speaker, my question is simple. Will the Premier and this government hold the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] raise at zero per cent for 2023, so everyone can afford to live, as they say? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite raises questions about affordability, and it's something that I think everybody in the province is watching very carefully as we go through periods of volatility in markets, volatility in commodity prices. From a government point of view, naturally we are worried about maintaining a competitive advantage in our province as well as the affordability for our citizens.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to say this, that our province has done remarkably well in containing costs. We are one of the most affordable places to live in this province. We have the second-lowest utility bundle in the country. We have the lowest auto insurance rates, the lowest natural gas rates, and for the total utility bundle, the average Saskatchewan family pays over \$700 less than a family in British Columbia; \$1,300 less than a family in Quebec; \$3,700 less than a family in Ontario; \$4,000 less than a family in Alberta; and over \$5,500 less than a family in Newfoundland.

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

Social Services and Affordability

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As leader of the Saskatchewan United Party, I hear every day regarding hardships from all across the province. Seniors who need the long-term care home benefit, they find it's not enough to pay their fees and incidental living expenses. Disabled citizens on the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program are facing tremendous hardships as inflation skyrockets. These people, these citizens of Saskatchewan, are facing choices. Do I pay my energy bill or do I eat? Do I pay my power bill or do I pay my prescription?

Mr. Speaker, these are terrible but very real choices facing our most vulnerable citizens of Saskatchewan. This is growth for all, as the government says? That's why today, Mr. Speaker, I am asking this government for a raise, but not for myself, but a raise for these seniors and disabled citizens who, unlike the members of this House, do not get automatic raises. Mr. Speaker, will the consumer price index be for these people as well as . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, the member referenced some of the programs that fall within the Ministry of Social Services. Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, we're hearing from folks, and we're looking at potential changes in the next couple weeks here in terms of increases.

What we have done, Mr. Speaker, we've quadrupled the seniors' income plan in this year's budget. We've increased SIS [Saskatchewan income support] benefits to some of our most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan housing benefit we have to help those folks with their rent, Mr. Speaker. There's so many programs that we have in terms of some of the other things we've done within the Ministry of Finance to help affordability for everyone across the province, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to continue to work on this. We'll continue to listen, and we'll have more to say in just a few days, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Government's Record on Jobs, Affordability, and Health Care

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to this debate here this morning at a critical time for so many in our province and, with respect, a government that's really fallen out of touch with the priorities of Saskatchewan people, with Saskatchewan people, families, and workers in communities across Saskatchewan. I'll be moving a motion at the end of my remarks for this debate that will condemn the government for its unacceptable record of failure on job creation, on health care, and providing relief for families struggling with cost of living, Mr. Speaker.

These are the real challenges that families are facing in this province. And what many are facing is a situation of serious hardship when we think of cost of living. We know as well that businesses across this province are suffering and dealing with the challenges of the hikes to cost that are being brought upon them by this government, the new taxes that have been brought upon them by this government, and the eroded and damaged fiscal position of households that have been so hurt by the actions of this government, Mr. Speaker.

When you have a government that piles on during a cost-of-living crisis onto families and households, it has catastrophic consumer impacts as well for businesses. And this all connects, Mr. Speaker, connects to the job situation in this province. And of course on that front, Saskatchewan people deserve more jobs and bigger paycheques, but instead what they've been offered up by this tired, out-of-touch Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker, is the worst jobs record in Canada.

You know, the record speaks for itself. The facts are there laid bare on the Statistics Canada website, Mr. Speaker, the worst economic record in Canada under this Premier, all across Canada. And sure, Mr. Speaker, we've come through some tough years. We faced a pandemic. We've had a challenging drought. But other provinces too have faced challenges and have faced the challenges of that pandemic as well, Mr. Speaker.

Last in the nation when it comes to jobs growth, which has really been non-existent in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Last in the nation when it comes to the GDP [gross domestic product] or

economic growth. But in this case we can't even reference the measure for Saskatchewan as economic growth because it's not. It's one of decline. The only province in Canada to record a decline over this period. And we see the last average annual growth in building permits, the worst record annually in average growth for investment, Mr. Speaker.

And that all connects back to the reality that Saskatchewan people are facing. They're not seeing the job opportunities that they deserve, not seeing the paycheques they deserve, and they're certainly not getting the cost-of-living relief that they deserve, Mr. Speaker, leaving them, you know, struggling month to month, many making some terribly hard choices, making choices with food and with rent, making choices as far as housing, pushing so many families into such a vulnerable and precarious situation, Mr. Speaker.

Now think of that situation and then look to the reality for this provincial government. Look at the reality that they're facing, Mr. Speaker. While families face this cost-of-living crisis, the province of Saskatchewan is enjoying record windfall revenues, Mr. Speaker.

You know, that unforgivable invasion in Ukraine causes loss and crisis that we can only fathom in Ukraine, for so many families connected to that, but in Saskatchewan it has other impacts. It has huge impacts of course for the incredible Ukrainian-Canadian families and communities and people throughout Saskatchewan, but it has sent the cost of living further through the roof at this period of time for families, Mr. Speaker. But for the province of Saskatchewan, it sent the revenues of this province, the money it collects, sky-high. It sent the resource revenues into windfall, Mr. Speaker. So there's no good excuse for that tired and out-of-touch government to not meaningfully work to provide some relief, to take some heat off Saskatchewan families.

But we have a government that's certainly not interested in making things a little better, Mr. Speaker, or to make a difference for people in the face of this generational challenge. No, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that wants to just pile on further. People are paying the price for the years of fiscal incompetence and mismanagement of this government. They're paying the price for the years of mismanagement and scandals, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, we've debated those in this Assembly over the years. You know, at times it might have felt a bit academic for folks as to, you know, what these debates were all about. But it's not academic anymore, Mr. Speaker, because that Sask Party government is now forcing Saskatchewan people to pay the price for their mismanagement, piling on with new taxes, new fees, with hikes to power bills and energy bills that are devastating for so many families across Saskatchewan, and devastating to so many local businesses across Saskatchewan.

Just look at the taxes that this government has piled on to the bills of Saskatchewan people, to the cost of households across Saskatchewan. The PST [provincial sales tax] alone, Mr. Speaker, since the massive tax hike of this government in 2017, the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history. The average Saskatchewan family is now paying more than \$1,000 more per year for PST, Mr. Speaker.

Now of course that was the time that this government, you know,

really pulled a fast one on Saskatchewan people. They had run in an election saying they weren't going to hike taxes and then the budget that was just a year later, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that imposed the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history. They imposed the PST onto construction labour, onto restaurants, onto insurance, onto children's clothing, Mr. Speaker, adding up costs on all these fronts, hurting local businesses.

Then the year following they stuck the PST onto used cars if you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, used cars. You know, you think of people across Saskatchewan who are already challenged with the cost of living. This is a government that stuck them with a tax on their used truck or their used car. Mr. Speaker, it defies common sense, it defies economic sense, and it put Saskatchewan people and families and farms in a position of hardship across Saskatchewan.

Fast forward to the current year where we have a government with sky-high, soaring windfall revenues from this unforgivable invasion and other economic factors that have sent those revenues sky-high, Mr. Speaker. But a government that instead of providing an ounce of relief in a meaningful way and a lasting way, Mr. Speaker, they hiked up people's bills into perpetuity, month after month after month, year after year after year. And the basics: power, your gas bill, your ability to run your furnace in winter. Just think of the costs in northern Saskatchewan for many households that rely on electricity for their heat.

[11:00]

Think of those power bills this winter, Mr. Speaker, all at a time where this is a government that hasn't been presenting opportunity by way of jobs. No, they've presented the worst jobs record in Canada and the worst increases to weekly earnings for Saskatchewan people. People deserve more jobs and bigger paycheques, without a doubt.

Saskatchewan people also deserve the health care they deserve and need when they need it, where they need it, Mr. Speaker. Instead what we've seen is a government that's really had callous disregard for the importance of accessing public health care in your community at your time of need, whether you're in a rural community and that rural hospital or that rural emergency room, or whether it's the access to a doctor — which is non-existent for far too many families and communities across Saskatchewan — or whether it's the surgical waits that have gone through the roof and the waits that we see in emergency rooms that are completely unacceptable. People languishing in emergency rooms for hours with young children and with parents and seniors at their time of need, sometimes when minutes matter within their life, Mr. Speaker, only to be denied the care and service that they so desperately need and deserve.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen a government that over the last number of years has simply not stepped up to the challenge of mental health and addictions needs in this province. For years we've had a broken mental health and addictions service or delivery of services within our system, Mr. Speaker. What that means is for far too many, they are left to suffer in despair, in depression, in darkness, Mr. Speaker, left without the treatment or support that they so desperately need at a time where it would make a difference.

For far too long, Mr. Speaker, I suspect all of us have known family members and constituents and others who have said they need help. They put up their hand and said they need help only to find out that that help might be months away, to be left to suffer, Mr. Speaker.

That doesn't work. There's a window of opportunity to step up and wrap around services when someone needs them. We need to make sure that we fix that broken mental health and addictions service to ensure treatment when people need it, Mr. Speaker. And we need to make sure that it's accessible to all, not barriers by way of cost, not costly private models that aren't there for all. We need to improve services for all in this province. And it's a matter frankly of saving lives, Mr. Speaker, but to be callous about it, it'll save money as well for the province of Saskatchewan to ensure those supports — better supports, needed supports when people need them — with respect to mental health and addictions crises in this province.

We've had our team — our leader, the member for Lakeview, the Leader of the Opposition, along with this team and lead critics like the member from Eastview and the member from Fairview — get out and reach out across the province. And this entire team has done the same in various files. And often the conversation, regardless of who you're meeting with, it goes to these three things I'm talking about today.

It's about the access to health care when you need it and the services we need to all be able to count on. It's about the good jobs that people deserve, the better pay that they deserve, the opportunity that Saskatchewan people are being denied, Mr. Speaker. And it's about the cost of living and about the duty of a government to step up and to offer some relief.

People are smart in this province, from the far South to the far North and everywhere in between, from our urban centres to First Nations and towns and villages and farms, all through the North. They know the fiscal position of this government — windfall revenues — and they see the failure to act as nothing but a betrayal of the responsibility of a government. But instead we see a tired, entitled government that's fallen out of touch and seems not to care, Mr. Speaker.

We'll keep fighting for the people of the province on this front, Mr. Speaker. We'll fight for change while in the benches here as an official opposition and as critics. And we'll work to change and deliver a better tomorrow as the next government if given the chance in the province of Saskatchewan.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I'll move the motion as follows:

That the Assembly condemns the government for its unacceptable record of failure on job creation, on health care, and providing relief for families struggling with the cost of living.

I so move.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Rosemont:

That the Assembly condemns the government for its

unacceptable record of failure on job creation, on health care, and on providing relief for families struggling with the cost of living.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank you to the member from Regina Rosemont for bringing his motion forward.

I would like to think with all the good things happening in this great province members opposite could find something positive to say. However they seem to manage to complain and make it sound like this is not the place to live. My colleagues and I strongly disagree with this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We believe that Saskatchewan is the greatest place to live and that we have the products that the world needs and the people that the world loves. So let's quit bashing the province, quit the doom-and-gloom mentality, and start talking about all the great things in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm a little bit accident-prone, and a lot of my friends know this, some of the colleagues. But I am a frequent flyer club member at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon and a few other facilities I'm sure, but a little more than the average person. Now it's been quite a while since my last visit and it's, you know, maybe a little bit of my older age coming on that I'm being a little more careful and lowering my visits.

Last weekend however, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was working on my truck in the evening and I had a wire from a grinder fly into my arm. I didn't really think much of it — bled a little bit but — till it started to swell about an hour later. And I was a little worried about the infection, so I made my way into the hospital to get it checked out. Amazing reception as always when I go into the hospital. I've always had so many great people helping us. They're great health care workers. Turns out the wire in my wrist was . . . The only wire they saw in their X-ray was from a previous surgery. So I got my shot and I was sent on my way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I wanted to get across here is how great our health care workers are. And I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our health care workers in all departments. The older I get, like I said, a little more frequent I seem to visit hospitals to see family and friends, and I hear this very often from people in the hospital. And I try and make a point to visit staff that are on duty at the time so they understand how much they are appreciated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk about health a little bit and what's happening here in our province. Roughly a year ago, our Health ministers aggressively started working on a plan with much consultation with stakeholders. This plan came together in September of last year and was released. The plan I speak of is the four-point health and human resources action plan.

Mr. Speaker, this plan is to recruit, train, incentivize, and retain health care workers. Saskatchewan is investing over \$60 million over the next two years to add over 1,000 health care professionals to Saskatchewan's labour pool. Here's a little update, Mr. Speaker, on how this is going.

In the past six months, the Saskatchewan health recruitment agency was formed. In November our Health minister led a health care recruitment mission to the Philippines. Now we've heard about this, but sometimes it seems like the members of the opposition don't really listen to the answers in question period here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so I think I should point some of these out. This was a very successful mission, and in recent weeks we have new recruits who have landed in Moose Jaw, Kindersley, Swift Current, Eastend, and Strassbourg, just to name a few.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, recently I attended an event, an announcement at Sask Poly where more than 550 additional seats were added to 18 post-secondary programs for priority health professions that are in demand. In September last year, 150 new nurse training seats were added. This comprises of 10 nurse practitioners, 124 registered nurses, and 16 psychiatric nurse seats.

Over the past 17 months, 57 family physicians were added; 98 specialists have been recruited to Saskatchewan from other provinces and countries for a total of over 155 more physicians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm not saying there's no challenges in our health care. What I am saying is that we are working on this. We are going to take this challenge head on as we've done in the past. All we have to do is go back to when we were given the privilege of forming government in 2007. And I'm not sure if members opposite remember those times or they just choose not to remember them or choose not to talk about them. But Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me refresh their memory a little bit.

The newly formed Saskatchewan Party government inherited the longest surgical wait times in the country. This is not all, Mr. Speaker. They closed 52 hospitals, with the large majority of our children at that time moving out of the province. Maybe they were content with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm not sure. But I know we sure were not.

In 2007 our then Health critic, before we had the privilege of forming government, became our Health minister and started the process that should have happened years earlier by hiring, over the next number of years, over 3,500 nurses and over 700 doctors. That number is much higher now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And there is still a ways to go, but we are definitely committed to making that happen.

The thing is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm allowed 10 minutes today and it's simply not enough time to talk about all the initiatives, but I'm going to do my best. Over the last . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, you never even took up your time actually. Over the last few months 185 job offers have been made to Filipino health care workers, including registered nurses, continuing care aides, medical labs assistants. As of February 22 the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] hired nearly 100 enhanced or new positions posted in high-priority classifications in rural and remote areas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, since October of last year, just a few months ago, 67 incentives up to \$50,000 for three-year service agreements have been approved — incentives up to \$50,000, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You heard me right. I had the privilege of joining polytech in bringing greetings, congratulatory messages on behalf of the government last year, and one of the interesting

statistics that I love to hear was over 94 per cent of the graduates are staying here in the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Another really great incentive, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and the Minister of Health was at the groundbreaking of this last year — but it's our urgent care centres. The one in another update, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the Regina facility is now over 50 per cent complete. There's also one going on in Saskatoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Hopefully it'll be a great day in Riversdale and it'll come into my area, but we're yet to find that out. In Saskatoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a partnership with Ahtahkakoop First Nation to build the urgent care centre there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I noted earlier, the former NDP government closed 52 hospitals, long-term care beds. This government since 2007 has built the children's hospital, the hospital in North Battleford, the hospital in Moose Jaw, begun the work in Prince Albert, new hospital coming soon to Weyburn. Designs have started for a hospital in Yorkton. I feel like I'm singing the song, "I've Been Everywhere" man, because that is what we're doing in this province. But I will not sing for you.

[11:15]

Something that is close to my heart, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and I don't have a lot of time left, so I'm just going to be brief here — working with youth. And I've worked with youth myself for over 35 years. I'm happy to mention that we have expanded mental health capacity building in schools after a successful pilot project, bringing the funding to \$2 million annually, now in 10 schools, promoting positive mental health in children, youth, and families in the community.

In partnership with the John Howard Society we're implementing a provincial model for integrated youth services. And this is starting up soon and there is going to be an online model until the sites are set up. There's going to be three sites for that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We have expanded services to eight locations for rapid access counselling services in south and west regions, bringing the total of 31 communities with free walk-in mental health counselling services.

There is so much more I'd love to talk about, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am running out of time. I will not be supporting the motion put forward from the member from Regina Rosemont. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour to be on my feet to speak to this motion brought forward by my colleague from Regina Rosemont. And I'm happy to support it because I think that it really, really hits the nail on the head as far as the big challenges that our province is facing right now.

And you know, I can hear the political, you know, jargon from the other side, well how we're criticizing the province. Let me be very clear. We're criticizing the failed leadership of this Sask Party government because they're letting the people of this province down. That's what we will stand up for every day in this

Assembly when it comes to their record of job creation, worst in the country during this Premier's time in office; their record on health care which I'll dig into significantly in my comments here; and their record on failing to address the significant cost-of-living crisis that we face, in fact making it worse.

I'll put a few comments together here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on those first items. But I really want to spend a lot of time focusing on their failures in providing folks the health care they need, where they need it, and when they need it.

But when it comes to job creation, you know, we've heard a lot of comments in this first week of spring session from the other side about who's got the facts right. And let me say that we're using statistics that take a look back at five years of this Premier's time since taking that seat. And there's no other way to look at it — worst in the country. Worst in the country when it comes to job creation for that five-year span. There's no other way to spin that, and we've got to take an honest look. It is the worst-in-the-country record from this Premier.

We also see failures from this Premier in terms of folks leaving this province, leading to that challenge of job creation. Worst outside the Atlantic provinces in terms of ensuring that folks who are new to Saskatchewan, new to our country stay here, put down roots here, are able to use their gifts and talents to invest in our communities. That's a track record of failure that's led to those worst-in-the-nation economic numbers and worst-in-the-nation numbers for job creation.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to spend some time talking about their failures in health, as the motion brought forward by my colleague details that this government has an unacceptable record. So I've got a few things I'd like to run through here.

You know, it's no secret that we've been meeting with folks all around this province. And I want to note it's often at their request. We've been invited into council rooms. We've been invited into coffee shops. We've been invited to sit down and listen to folks in communities like Humboldt, Lanigan, Prince Albert, Battlefords, Cupar, Southey, Shellbrook, Delisle, Fort Qu'Appelle, and of course Saskatoon and Regina. And there's more to come.

And we've gotten out there to meet with folks face to face because they've got a very frustrating situation. They've got a government that isn't listening, a government that isn't interested in finding the solutions. And that's what they say to us, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In fact, you can look at the comments put on the record by some of these municipal leaders who have stated in their local newspapers that the Sask Party government won't meet with them and isn't listening. What a shameful thing to hear from other elected leaders, that the government charged with providing health care isn't listening. It's exactly what we hear when we're out there visiting with folks.

Now we saw a display earlier this week in which members opposite were accusing us of being desperate, and then we see the minister for rural health care get up with this display and say, well I was at an ag show and the NDP wasn't there. I don't think I've seen anything more desperate looking in the last two and a half years I've had in this Assembly. We've got ministers of Health who refuse to show up at town halls that they're invited

to. We've got local MLAs refusing to show up at town halls that they were invited to, refusing to show up and then putting on that kind of desperate display here in the Assembly. I can't even say it's surprising, because that's been what I've seen from this government throughout the last, you know, 16 years that they've been in office.

What we hear when we're out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is concerns about short-staffing in health care, short-staffing crisis that is 100 per cent the result of their mismanagement of the health care system. They have nowhere else to point but to themselves. Will they take the responsibility? No. They never do. They never take responsibility for their own failings and the ways that they're letting people of Saskatchewan down.

So we have independent officers, statutory officers of the legislature like the Provincial Auditor who's pointed out the facts, the facts that we lost 600 health care workers in just one year, 600 fewer health care workers serving this province, and that their own plan will leave us 1,000 health care workers short, 1,000 health care workers short. And yet all we see, day after day, is this government patting themselves on the back as if they've done everything they can, that everything is peachy keen out there. And it's not.

What have they done? Well we heard a reference already today about surgical wait times. Well I'll tell you that today, today on the Government of Saskatchewan website, it indicates that there are roughly 43,000 people waiting for surgery, and that since 2010, the entire time that this government has been in office . . . from your website, Minister. It's from your website. Maybe you want to have a look.

Okay. From 2010 until the end of last year, there's been a 106 per cent increase in folks waiting more than 12 months for surgery. We know that we rank last in Canada currently for hip and knee replacements. This is information that comes directly from this government's website, and yet they're going to stand in the Assembly and say that everything's okay, they're doing the best job. And they clearly are not. The facts are the facts.

We hear about short-staffing and crisis out there in rural communities and in large urban centres. But the fact is that this government, when health regions were amalgamated, they had a recommendation that they said that they would adopt, and that recommendation was to strengthen community health advisory networks, to strengthen them to ensure that local voices in health care were at the table. Had those local voices been there, they would have been raising a flag to this coming crisis. In fact they had, but we still have a government that isn't listening. And it's demonstrated right here because they refuse to listen to local voices, and that's part of the problem that got us to where we are today. Local voices want a seat at the table. Local leaders, health care workers have valuable insights to offer, and yet they're left feeling like their hands are tied. They're left feeling like they've got a government in office that isn't listening to them. And while I'm being heckled by the Health minister, I'd encourage him to get out to those town halls that he's invited to, to listen to people and get to work to meet their needs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, folks out there are frustrated because this government is lacking in the transparency that folks need to get the care where they need it. Instead we've got folks forming

Facebook groups and developing apps to find out which facilities are open. We know that last summer there were 37 hospitals and health care facilities that were closed during one week in the summer — 37.

Are folks able to find out where they are, or are they going to do what we heard is now referred to as the Kamsack shuffle, where they get to the hospital in Kamsack to see a notice on the door that tells them to go to Canora, and then they drive to Canora and see a notice on the door that tells them to go to Kamsack? This is unacceptable. It's unacceptable and it is failed leadership from this Sask Party government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am about 10 per cent through the notes that I have to talk on for today. There's so much more to talk about. We can talk about emergency rooms, the canary in the coal mine for our health system, and when we see the kind of backlog that we have in our emergency rooms, we need to look deeper at what's causing that. We hear about paramedics who spend an entire shift waiting in the hallway to offload a patient. We hear about the number of seniors who are living in hospital, what's called alternative-level-of-care beds, unable to move into long-term care or a better place for them.

We have folks looking at what's happening in emergency rooms, saying that this is 100 per cent on the plate of this government for creating every problem that we see in health care today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the motion brought forward by my colleague, because this government is failing to provide the health care that people need.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I welcome the opportunity to enter into the debate today and challenge the assertion that this Saskatchewan Party government has not addressed the affordability issues that have taken rise not just in this province, not just in this country, but in countries all over the globe.

I think we first need to look at why folks are dealing with the increased cost of living: inflation. We witnessed what happens when demand is greater than supply. The cost of goods and services goes up and things become more expensive. One interview I read with an economics professor stated that the high rate of inflation we are facing includes the 2008 financial crisis, trade wars between the US and China, and finally the pandemic and supply chain disruptions.

The Bank of Canada has attempted to tame the demand to get inflation under control by hiking interest rates eight times since last March. The theory is that by making it more costly to borrow money, people will spend less, eventually driving prices down. The reality is that these interest rate hikes have an effect on anyone with a mortgage, car payments, debt, and the economy as a whole. I mention the 2008 financial crisis because this government has introduced and enhanced a multitude of programs back to 2007 to make life more affordable for every citizen in this province.

Let's examine some facts. How about personal income tax, Mr.

Deputy Speaker. We have reduced income tax that has removed 112,000 low-income citizens off of the provincial income tax roll. Saskatchewan has one of the highest tax-free thresholds in Canada where a family of four pays no income tax on their first \$53,433 of income. Under the NDP, the same family of four started paying provincial income tax at \$26,150.

The Fraser Institute published a bulletin late last fall that ranked Saskatchewan as first in personal income tax performance, in part due to low marginal tax rates across income tax levels and the low number of income tax brackets:

Premier Moe was further aided by his province's low number of income tax brackets (3) and most notably the fact that he was the only premier to cut personal income taxes across all income levels.

Provincial indexation is another government initiative to help address affordability in Saskatchewan. Indexation of the personal income tax system preserves the real value of personal tax credits, the income tax brackets, as well as benefits such as the Saskatchewan low-income tax credit. This low-income tax credit is a refundable tax credit where a single adult can receive up to \$358 and a family of four can receive up to \$998. Since 2008-2009, our government has reduced the cumulative education property tax burden by over \$2.8 billion. Under the NDP, Saskatchewan residents paid the highest education property tax in the entire country.

[11:30]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have reduced the cost of child care by an average of 70 per cent, and on Monday of this week our Minister of Education made an important announcement that parent fees for regulated child care in this province will be reduced to \$10 a day starting on April 1st. That's three years ahead of schedule. This parent fee reduction is the third fee reduction since August 2021, and Saskatchewan is one of just three Canadian provinces to achieve this milestone. As Sanjay Patel, a parent in Saskatoon, said:

I'll probably be saving around 500 or \$600 a month compared to last year with this most recent reduction in parent fees. This is going to help my family out a lot because we'll have more money left over for things our family can use.

Also helping to address affordability, families in Saskatchewan with children enrolled in sports, art, and cultural activities will continue to be able to claim the active families benefit on their 2023 taxes. This benefit provides a refundable tax credit of \$150 per year per child to eligible families.

We are fortunate to pay the second-lowest utility bundle in Canada. That includes electricity, energy, and phone. SaskEnergy's residential customers continue to benefit from the lowest natural gas bills in Canada. SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] customers benefit from the lowest average personal auto insurance rates in the country with the most comprehensive injury coverage.

Our youngest daughter developed a new appreciation for the fact that Saskatchewan has the lowest vehicle insurance when she

was living in Alberta as we pay on average less than half of what an Alberta driver pays. In 2021, SGI rebated approximately \$380 per vehicle and in 2022 there was another \$100 rebate for every vehicle registered in the province as of March 9th, 2022.

I would also like to talk about housing affordability as it continues to be a major concern across Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Last June the *Regina Leader-Post* ran an article written by Dina Al-Shibeeb of MoneyWise. Regina was ranked as the most affordable metro area in the country, followed in second spot by Saskatoon. Then on Tuesday of this week, a news article stated that Regina and Saskatoon were among the most affordable cities for first-time home buyers based on a new report out of Alberta. I'd like to quote some of that article by Lindsay Newman of 650 CKOM:

Edmonton Homes compared and ranked the most populated cities across Canada by average annual income compared to house prices, property tax, and electricity bills. Regina is considered the second-most affordable, with a score of 56.6 out of 70. Saskatoon was third with an affordability score of 56.1.

This article goes on to quote mortgage broker Carrie Cardinal that the reason why the two cities are affordable for first-time homebuyers is because of house prices. She added that the low unemployment rates in the province help make the two cities affordable. Carrie explained why Regina and Saskatoon are becoming attractive to first-time homebuyers:

It's really desirable to raise a family and become a homeowner. Our house prices year over year remain steady for good long-term investments. And I think that attracts people to stay in the province and to buy property here and to build a life and a family.

Saskatchewan is the only province to offer the first-time homebuyer's tax credit, and the home renovation tax credit is the only credit of its kind in the country.

Let's turn our attention to affordability measures for seniors. We increased the maximum monthly benefit through the seniors' income plan by \$30 per month in the last budget with another \$30 increase for 2023-24. The SIP [seniors' income plan] benefit has tripled under this Saskatchewan government since 2007. Under the senior citizens' ambulance assistance program there is full coverage for inter-facility transfers, and the cost of ground ambulances has been lowered from \$275 to \$135 per trip for seniors 65 years of age and over. Under the seniors' drug plan, eligible seniors over 65 pay \$25 per prescription. As the MLA representing the constituency with the highest percentage of seniors, I know that these programs are appreciated and they bring relief to cost-of-living pressures.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we delivered a one-time, tax-free \$500 Saskatchewan affordability tax credit cheque to all adult residents who had filed a 2021 tax return in this province. Every single resident. This payment was another government initiative to help make life more affordable for Saskatchewan people.

Low utility costs, reduced income tax levels, \$10-a-day child care, seniors' income plan increases, tax credits for homeowners, the \$500 affordability tax credit cheque — just some of the

measures that help Saskatchewan residents deal with that inflation that I talked about at the beginning of my remarks.

As our Finance minister has stated, "Our government recognizes that costs have risen due to inflation, and we are committed to taking steps to help keep life affordable for Saskatchewan people."

These are but a few examples of how this government has addressed the cost of living for every citizen of this province, including families. To sum it up, Saskatchewan is the most affordable province in this country. I will not be supporting this motion put forward by the member for Regina Rosemont. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my absolute honour and privilege to enter into this 75-minute debate. I'm looking forward to the end when I can . . . for a few reasons but also so I can support the motion that my good friend, the member from Regina Rosemont, moved.

You know, we hear the Sask Party government talking a lot about, you know, things that they want to talk about. That's for sure, Mr. Speaker. But what we never hear this government speak about are the things that we're hearing from Saskatchewan citizens are their priorities, Mr. Speaker. And I think the priorities of Saskatchewan citizens are really reflective in the motion that my good friend, the member from Regina Rosemont, has moved today. And I appreciate the mostly thoughtful entries that have been put forward, in particular the last one from the last member in the debate today, because this is a concern that a lot of people in Saskatchewan are talking about.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I'll have to admit I don't actually listen to a lot of talk radio, Mr. Speaker, on either side. I'm a music gal. I like listening to music in the morning. It gets me going. The Wolf is my favourite radio station actually at our household. We like rock music in our family.

But I'll tell you, every morning when we're driving to work as a family what we hear those radio DJs [disc jockey] talking about are concerns about rising costs of living. They're talking about rising gas prices. They're talking about rising food prices, and they're talking about their rising utility bills. So to me that's a good gauge.

You know, we can talk about . . . Members on that side, they like to quote one talk radio station. Members on this side, we sometimes quote other talk radio stations. But you know what? The Wolf's got their pulse on the people of Saskatchewan. I'll tell you that right now, Mr. Speaker. Because that's what we're hearing from across the province, people who are concerned about how they're going to pay their bills, Mr. Speaker. And this Sask Party government isn't doing anything to help those people, Mr. Speaker.

This is a government that makes life more expensive for Saskatchewan citizens. They hike SaskPower rates. They hike SaskEnergy rates. They refuse to freeze the gas tax, Mr. Speaker. That's something we've been calling on this government to do

for a while, Mr. Speaker. Now we're seeing gas prices go up again. I think I saw it's at, like, \$1.57 a litre, Mr. Speaker, rolling into the weekend.

You know, but still this government, while sitting on record windfall revenues, refusing to do things that would be crucial, would be important for Saskatchewan citizens, that would help them with their pocketbooks today, Mr. Speaker. And that's just indicative of this Sask Party government's record on the economy and on affordability.

Mr. Speaker, during the last five years, that Premier's reign, this government has seen some of the worst records in the country. Saskatchewan, under this government's reign, on average ranks last among provinces for job creation at 3 per cent. Mr. Speaker, over the last five years under that Premier's leadership, Saskatchewan ranks last among provinces for GDP at negative 6 per cent.

And these numbers are important, Mr. Speaker, because often the Sask Party government likes to blame, oh well, there was the pandemic during those last five years, Mr. Speaker. Times were tough. Well, times were tough for everybody in the country, Mr. Speaker. So when you're looking at a national perspective — every single province — and you look over the average of the last five years, you see a real pattern that emerges that should be lain directly at the feet of that Premier and this Sask Party government.

Mr. Speaker, this government loves to talk about population numbers, but then what they don't love to talk about are how many folks come to our province and then leave our province shortly thereafter. This government is failing at every single front in retaining, keeping people in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, even the migration numbers aren't great. Over the last five years under that Premier's leadership, Saskatchewan ranked second last among provinces for provincial migration, Mr. Speaker. The out-migration numbers are absolutely dismal, Mr. Speaker. And that's an incredibly important piece of the puzzle, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about . . . And there is a real labour shortage in Saskatchewan. We hear it across the board. Industries all across the board, Mr. Speaker, are struggling, are talking about their struggles with both recruiting workers and retaining workers.

You know what, Mr. Speaker, you know what makes it difficult to retain workers in Saskatchewan? When they can't find a family doctor for themselves and their family, Mr. Speaker. When elementary schools are being underfunded and we've got classrooms that are bursting at the seams, Mr. Speaker, that's the real world problems that cause people to leave this province. And those are 100 per cent left at the feet of this Sask Party government.

You know what also makes it difficult for employers to recruit into this province? When that government is making international headlines for bringing convicted wife killers into the legislature as special guests, Mr. Speaker. All of these are important pieces that play a role in our province's ability to recruit and retain workers. And that again is all at the feet of this Sask Party government and the decisions they make, Mr. Speaker.

Another shameful record of this government is the average weekly earnings, Mr. Speaker. Between February of 2018 and December of 2022, Saskatchewan ranked second last for wage growth, Mr. Speaker. Well the government announced that they would be moving to \$15-an-hour minimum wage. We're still not there yet. We have to wait until October 1st, 2024 which is a lot of months of cost-of-living crisis for these families to deal with before we even get to \$15 an hour. We're still among the last in the provinces. When we finally get to that point, we'll still be among the last in the provinces for our minimum wage, Mr. Speaker.

Wage growth, generally speaking across the board, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan has largely been flat over the last decade, over the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker. Again, something that falls at the feet of this Sask Party government.

Mr. Speaker, I was speaking earlier about Saskatchewan's retention rates and some of the choices of this Sask Party government and the results and the ways that that results in the challenges around recruiting and retaining workers in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan's five-year retention rates have fallen from 78 per cent to 63 per cent, and under this Premier, the five-year retention rate has continued to decline, Mr. Speaker. These are real-life decisions that this government makes that has real impacts on both our economy, our jobs, and our workers and our families, Mr. Speaker.

[11:45]

Mr. Speaker, another thing that this Sask Party government has under their record, they've lost a net 35,856 people to other parts of Canada over the last five years.

Now my colleagues and I are doing the good work, going to all four corners of the province, speaking with community leaders, speaking with industry leaders. And I particularly want to credit my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Nutana, and my colleagues from Saskatoon Eastview and Saskatoon Fairview who have been leading the charge in talking to community leaders from all walks of life, from all industries, from chambers to health care leadership, speaking to them about their concerns and their dreams for their communities.

This is the important work that this government should be doing. And I encourage them, that instead of what did they did last summer — holding closed-door sovereignty meetings — that perhaps they open the doors a little bit wider and they speak to people outside of their inner bubble, Mr. Speaker. Because that's where real leadership happens. That's where real consultation and real ideas come forward that can help Saskatchewan.

Like our leader here, the member from Regina Lakeview, has said, "We've got a hell of a great story to tell here in Saskatchewan," Mr. Speaker. We're proud of this province; we love this province. We want this province to thrive. It's not reaching its full potential under this government, which is why I will be supporting the motion from my colleague. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees.

It's an honour to be able to be on my feet to enter into this debate on job creation, affordability, and health care. And I think it's really important that we paint an accurate picture of where we are today and where our province is headed in the months and years to come under the guidance of this government.

I'm not going to dance around the edges when it comes to this very important topic, because our government takes this province's economic well-being extremely seriously. Statistics are only useful when they're analyzed in full context and not cherry picked like the opposition loves to do. Because they know what the full picture is and the reality of what is happening around this province doesn't support the narrative that they are trying to push.

Jobs are being created all across this province, and they're being created by the thousands. They're good-paying jobs. They encompass every sector of our economy, from energy and resources, retail and wholesale, manufacturing, research and development, mining, forestry — the list could go on, but I think you get the point. There's never been a better time to be in Saskatchewan. And everywhere you turn, there's optimism.

So why is Saskatchewan so successful when it comes to jobs being created, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees? What's fuelling this economic and population growth that we haven't seen in over a hundred years? There's a combination of factors, but really when it comes down to it there's three keys.

First, for the last 15-plus years our government has been working to provide the right economic climate for job creators to invest in Saskatchewan — competitive taxes, fair regulatory standards, and most importantly a vision for the future. That future is one that is laser focused by this government on having more people moving here for a career, careers and jobs in all of our traditional and emerging fields, both private and public sector, and opening up the unlimited opportunities for new businesses to be established and for existing ones to expand.

We've alluded to it before, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, and I'll just put it on the record again that Saskatchewan has what the world needs and the orders are coming in like never before for our food, our fuel, and our fertilizer.

But it doesn't end there. We're exporting more agricultural commodities, energy products, minerals, forestry products, farm machinery and parts, electronics, more vehicle parts and aviation components, and more general consumer goods. In fact our exports are reaching heights never seen before in this province's 118-year history. The statistics, when analyzed in their entirety, tell a story that is resulting in growth that works for everyone. Just recently, we announced exports to Mexico topped \$1 billion for the first time ever.

I spoke about it yesterday, but it's worth repeating today, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. New numbers out yesterday from Stats Canada show Saskatchewan is leading the nation in export growth. They're up a staggering 56 per cent from January 2022 to January of this year, and that's on top of 41 per cent increase in 2022 over 2021. Our province's annual exports have grown by more than \$20 billion since 2012.

To help and encourage that growth, our government has opened

international trade offices: India, Japan, Singapore, Mexico City, United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, and later this year Saskatchewan will be opening an office in Germany. These trade offices are producing results for Saskatchewan residents.

I should note that among the other poor policy and operational choices, the opposition wouldn't be doing this. Members opposite regularly criticize our government's decision to ensure Saskatchewan's interests come first and that we're at the table face to face with our international trade partners. It's very important to the people of Saskatchewan because it creates jobs.

I believe it was the member from Regina University who, just last year on April 7th, filled this Assembly with doom and gloom and a level of negativity that we hadn't seen since probably the day before. But the member stated, and I quote:

This budget is a miss for the people of Saskatchewan and most confusingly, a miss on their own goals. One of the goals, Mr. Speaker: 1.4 million people living in Saskatchewan, and now we lead in people fleeing the Sask Party's province. One hundred thousand new jobs. Well we're down 23,000 and there's no plan to add any more in this budget.

Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, there's a very good reason why, when it comes to the economic well-being of our province, that this government will not be seeking the opposition's advice, ever.

I believe it was on December 4th of last year that our province surpassed the population of 1.2 million people. That's now been revised upward. As of yesterday on the StatsCan live population tracker, there's now 1,210,270 people calling Saskatchewan home. And the number of good-paying jobs across this province keeps increasing. That, my friends, is good news and there is much more to come. It is growth that works for everyone, absolutely.

Over the last few months I've been privileged to meet and welcome over 1,500 new Canadians who proudly call this province their home. These are people who recognized the opportunities that our province offers for careers, from education to the promise of raising their family in a place that cares about them. They're coming from all over the world: Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Peru, Mexico, Philippines, Vietnam, Australia, Ukraine. And I think, if I recall correctly, each citizenship ceremony represents newcomers from around 20 to 25 different countries.

And being a part of these citizenship ceremonies that are held in our province is incredibly fulfilling. Like many of those who moved west in the late 1800s and early 1900s, many of our newest citizens have given up everything to come to Canada and, more importantly, to come to Saskatchewan because we offer stability, we offer opportunity, and we offer prosperity.

Year over year since we formed this government in 2007, our province's economy has been strong and resilient. And it's only getting stronger, despite the disastrous economic headwinds created solely by the federal Liberal-NDP coalition government of Justin Trudeau and Jagmeet Singh.

But back here at home I find it particularly interesting that day in and day out like clockwork, the NDP opposition desperately grasps for a daily headline by disparaging our economy at every turn by twisting and cherry-picking statistics and presenting them in a negative narrative that only they could possibly dream up. I guess that's what you do when you're Jagmeet's branch managers and you have to follow orders from above.

But anyway, the folks across the way in here maybe missed this memo from the Conference Board of Canada, who just last week had this to say, and I quote:

Saskatchewan's mining and agriculture sectors are expected to be strong drivers of growth again in 2023. Farm receipts are expected to post a bigger increase in Saskatchewan than any other province in Canada, as the province continues its supply-driven recovery following the drought of 2021. The Conference Board of Canada forecasts Saskatchewan's GDP to expand 1.6 per cent in 2023, followed by a 2 per cent gain in 2024.

I'm beginning to run short on time, so I'm just going to jump ahead here in my notes a little bit and just touch on the fact that Saskatchewan had 576,800 people employed last year. That's an increase of 18,600 or 3.3 per cent from 2021. And in 2023 we're off to a great start. In the month of January alone, employers in our province added 16,400 new jobs. This represents an increase of 2.9 per cent compared to January of 2022.

I'll wrap this up, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, by putting this on record: Saskatchewan is exporting more goods and products than we've ever exported in our history. Our business community is as healthy as it's ever been, and they're creating more jobs than ever before. Combined with our government that's committed to fostering and nurturing this growth, we'll continue to see more opportunities for everyone, no matter where they live in Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, for providing me with the opportunity to enter into this debate and to set the record straight on increased job creation and economic success, which is growth that works for everyone. I appreciate the time. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The 65-minute period has expired. The 10-minute question-and-answer period will begin. I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. Our government remains committed to providing reliable and affordable energy and utility services to Saskatchewan residents. The just transition proposed and backed by the Trudeau-Singh coalition will not only drive those costs much higher, they also have the potential to destroy tens of thousands of jobs across Western Canada.

To the member from Saskatoon Eastview: will you openly criticize your federal Liberal-NDP leadership for their grossly expensive virtue-signalling policies? And will you for once advocate for the honest, hard-working energy workforce that keeps our lights on and our natural gas flowing throughout the year? Or will you continue to sit back and quietly contribute to the inflation problem in this country?

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

Mr. Love: — I thank the member opposite for his virtue-signalling question. You know what he's going to get on this side of the Assembly? He's going to get a caucus and a team that will always stand up for workers in Saskatchewan, will always stand up for Saskatchewan energy, that will always stand up for Saskatchewan families who need to ensure that they can afford a high-quality life right here in our great province.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, to the member from Riversdale: at a time where his government enjoys record resource revenues, windfall revenues, and at a time where his constituents and the people of Saskatchewan face a cost-of-living crisis, how on earth does he think it makes any sense to stick his constituents and the people of Saskatchewan with more taxes and bigger power bills and bigger energy bills?

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

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And thank you to the member from Rosemont. I'll tell you what I'm not going to do, and what we on this of the House are not going to do. We are not going to put the PST back up to 9 per cent. We are going to provide affordability measures which we've been doing annually for years, over \$2 billion of affordability measures, taken 112,000 people off the provincial tax roll.

We provided \$500 affordability cheques, which if you actually consulted your constituents you'd realize what a great impact that had on them. SaskEnergy has done such an amazing job with our natural gas utility in this province. If you look at provinces beside us, you would see that their utility rates are astoundingly higher. And they've done a great job, absolutely.

So what I'm not going to do is make sure that we go back to an NDP government and raise the taxes. Thank you.

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

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In their 2022 NDP convention resolutions, the opposition did not mention agriculture producers once. Not once, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is an NDP that didn't care about farmers when they were in government, and they sure don't care now. If they did care about our Saskatchewan producers, the most climate-conscious and sustainable producers on the planet, they would stand up to the policies of the federal government that they continue to support.

[12:00]

To the member from Saskatoon Eastview: will you stand with us against the federal government's energy policies that are putting tax after tax on producers and consumers, and support our Saskatchewan-first legislation?

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

Mr. Love: — I thank the member opposite for the question. I thank him for paying so much attention to resolutions that are debated in a democratic way at our convention. Maybe you'd like to attend sometime and listen in person.

But I'll tell you what else we won't do. I'll tell you what else we won't be doing. We won't be writing letters, like members of his government have done, to drag down producers, to threaten and to blame them for situations beyond their control. We won't be doing that. We will always fight for those producers. We'll always stand up for those folks who provide food and economic benefit for families in this province. Thanks for the great question.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during a generational cost-of-living crisis, why is the member for Churchill-Wildwood more interested in protecting corporate grocery chains and meat packers than the pocketbooks of her constituents?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

Ms. Lambert: — I thank you for the question. I did want to make mention of your leader that was quoted last fall as saying, "In an affordability crisis, we have some of the best rates [utility rates] as a province." So we agree with that, and we're going to continue our track record of keeping Saskatchewan affordable.

As I mentioned in my remarks, we've got the second-lowest utility bundles in the country. We have reduced provincial income tax levels. We just announced \$10-a-day child care. We've made a number of steps to address seniors' issues and affordability issues. We've offered tax credits for homeowners, \$500 affordability cheques. Many, many measures on the record that we have done to address affordability in this province. Thank you.

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

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're coming up on an anniversary, not a happy anniversary for the members on this side of the floor. What I'm referring to now is the NDP government's closure of over 50 hospitals under the guise of, and I quote former Health minister Louise Simard here, "managing change." That New Democrat management left Saskatchewan people without health care in hundreds of communities.

To the member from Regina Rosemont: will your party commit to supporting our health human resource action plan and our Saskatchewan-first legislation so we never go back to the days of the NDP managing change by closing and permanently shuttering health facilities?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member

from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this comes from a government that's old in the tooth, that's tired and out of touch with the reality in Saskatchewan. But beyond that, they're failing Saskatchewan people when it comes to health care in rural Saskatchewan and urban Saskatchewan. This is a government that this summer, in one month, had 37 health facilities under closure, Mr. Speaker, that has Saskatchewan people rallying in communities across this province. You think of Kamsack, which had over 200 people fighting for emergency care in their hospital, Mr. Speaker.

As for the damage of Grant Devine and their predecessors and the corruption and the waste and the mismanagement, Mr. Speaker, and what that caused to this province, well we heard the member talking about some of it, Mr. Speaker. But what we will do is we'll fight for people today, for the health care they need in communities when they need it, and to fire up this stagnant economy because of the choices . . .

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

Mr. Love: — But on that note, to the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, do they support the return of community health advisory networks to ensure that local voices in health care have a seat at the table?

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

Mr. Friesen: — Well thank you very much for the question. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we do in this side of the House is we do proper consultation. Our ministers have been around the province, they go around the province all over different communities and talk to different communities. That is something that I am very invested in myself, as well as my colleagues in our own communities and constituencies: talking to them and finding out what the needs are, and then directly addressing those.

So in answer to your question, we will absolutely continue to serve the constituents that we were elected here to serve.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The members opposite are very critical of the rising power bills from SaskPower to Saskatchewan people. Thanks to publicly available data, we know that our fleet of coal-fired power plants are the most affordable way we have of generating baseload power. Will the member from Regina Douglas Park advocate for extending the use of our coal-fired power stations into the future?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, classic Sask Party move to blame everything else on everybody else except for themselves. Yeah, we are critical of the raising power hikes and energy hikes that this government is doing and the impact that is having on

Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan workers. We will continue to listen to Saskatchewan workers and fight for Saskatchewan workers. That . . .

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The 75-minute debate has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 — Saskatchewan-First Policies and Legislation

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Ms. C. Young.]

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in the Legislative Assembly today to support the motion put forward by my colleague from the constituency of Lloydminster.

First of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's read the motion in its entirety so we have a full understanding of its meaning:

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we believe that people in Saskatchewan are proud of a sound, sensible bill that's been brought out legally and economically. That's exactly what the Saskatchewan-first policies legislation is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in our wonderful province today, we continue to see and feel the crippling effect that federal policies are having. Much to our dismay, that is our reality. All that these federal policies are doing is holding down Saskatchewan from reaching its full potential. As a province that is full of potential, policies such as the federal carbon tax, the clean fuel standard, Bill C-69, the clean electricity standard, and the fertilizer emissions cap is only hurting the growth of our beautiful province. This is all thanks to the Trudeau-Singh coalition government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Bill No. 88, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will protect our province's natural resources. This is so important because without the natural resources we are so fortunate to have in this province, we would not be able to weather the economic recession storm like those that are experiencing this elsewhere in Canada and the world.

Saskatchewan is and always has been dependent on agriculture and on the development of its non-renewable natural resources, forestry resources, and electrical energy generation and production. Saskatchewan's ability to control the development of its non-renewable natural resources, its forestry resources, and its electrical energy generation and production is critical to the future well-being and prosperity of Saskatchewan and its people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this legislation will confirm Saskatchewan's constitutional sovereign autonomy and will foster our strength and that of Canada as a whole. In Saskatchewan and Canada, we have among the most sustainable and environmentally friendly oil and gas production on the planet. Saskatchewan is known as being a world leader in carbon capture technology, and our government is proud to support expanding the use of CCS [carbon capture and storage] in the province. Our priorities include expanding our oil infrastructure investment program to include CO₂ pipelines and enhancing our competitiveness in enhanced oil recovery.

The federal government has shown support for carbon capture and utilization and storage projects, but not for enhanced oil recovery using carbon capture, utilization, and storage. This is despite having EOR [enhanced oil recovery] using CCUS [carbon capture, utilization, and storage] reduces emissions by 82 per cent compared to traditional extraction methods in Saskatchewan. The facts speak for themselves and the federal government needs to support these projects to ensure restrictions in emissions occur and keep Saskatchewan and Western Canada industries competitive.

Now more than ever, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need improved energy infrastructure in North America to deliver our energy products to market and support what is a highly integrated energy market that we have. Pipelines are by far and away the safest way of moving crude oil.

Bill C-69 interferes with adequately moving the oil that is produced right here in Saskatchewan. Construction of the Keystone XL pipeline should be a top priority for Canada-US economic relations. The federal government should be doing more to fight for pipelines as they are critical for North American energy security. The most sustainable oil in the world would be in the Keystone XL pipeline.

When you consider that TC Energy announced that the Keystone XL pipeline would have been net zero emissions when it first turns on and is powered by 100 per cent renewables by 2030, this should be a priority in terms of government goals and reducing emissions, unlike oil brought in from countries like Venezuela and Saudi Arabia that produces considerably higher amounts of emissions in the production of their oil.

This government will continue to support and promote our traditional oil, gas, and mining sectors. We welcome new technologies and all forms of energy, including the diversification to expand into new mining explorations such as helium, lithium, rare earth, and critical minerals. The Saskatchewan government supports investment, job creation, and innovation in both new and existing sectors that will keep us safe. Protecting Saskatchewan's incredible investment story, economic successes, the creation of pro-business, pro-investment climate, and working with, and not turning our backs on, workers

in traditional sectors is what this government is planning on doing.

Let's not forget that the federal government is withholding millions of dollars from SaskPower in carbon tax, which could be used to invest in renewables and power security right here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my office within the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency, we get many calls and concerns about the carbon tax amount on SaskPower and SaskEnergy bills from constituents. For most, the accumulation of carbon tax is quite often equal to the total bill itself, making it double. Does this make economic sense, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

This specific carbon tax has left 60 per cent of Canadian households financially burdened. How does this support the people and economic growth of our province? We continue to ask the federal government these exact questions. When the federal government continues to apply GST [goods and services tax] on top of the carbon tax, this just becomes a tax added on top of another tax.

The clean fuel standard, basically a carbon tax number two. This tax will have a huge impact on retail, rail, the ag sector, trucking, manufacturing, and of course heating your home and fuelling your car. This new policy will cost Saskatchewan people and industries hundreds of millions of dollars by the year 2030.

These additional costs are on top of continually escalating carbon taxes which has already impacted these industries' competitiveness, including agriculture and resource industries within our province. The federal fertilizer emissions cap appears to directly attack the food production that our farmers work so very hard to grow, food the world so desperately needs, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Another federal tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the federal clean electricity regulations, which stipulate that there will be no fossil fuel-generated power by 2035. As SaskPower has said time and time again, this is literally impossible in the province of Saskatchewan. This quantifies direct economic harm.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you consider that presently our power generation for the year ending December 31st, 2022 for the province has been 39 per cent from natural gas and 33 per cent from coal, totalling 72 per cent from these two sources alone, I believe it is a very aggressive target imposed by the federal government, which is to have all generated power from coal to be terminated by the end of 2030 and all power generated from fossil fuels, which would be natural gas, concluded by the end of 2035.

[12:15]

Saskatchewan-first is simply that, ensuring and protecting the economy, and it's about protecting Saskatchewan. This bill creates the framework to define, address, and quantify economic harm because that harm is real and is being spread out across the western part of Canada.

The Saskatchewan-first legislation simply asserts existing rights that are being undermined, not claims for new or radical powers.

These are already included within this province's constitutional powers; however they are not being adequately recognized or respected by the federal government. This bill is not about separation as some people have perceived. It's not the same Act as what Alberta has proposed. It's not about gratuitous fed-bashing. It is simply about asserting what our provincial rights are under the existing constitution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this legislation is an important part of defending and asserting Saskatchewan's economic autonomy and protecting Saskatchewan jobs and our economic future. It truly is time for the line to be drawn. Saskatchewan-first recognizes and addresses root causes of affordability and protectors of affordability of the utmost importance to the people of Saskatchewan. The fact that the provinces have exclusive jurisdiction over natural resources is not our language. It is the language of the constitution under the divisions of powers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government doesn't enjoy going down this road; however this is where we are. As a province, we believe it's only fair to ask for a fair deal that won't harm our economy. As our Premier has stated previously, a strong Saskatchewan means a strong Canada. This legislation is to clarify and protect Saskatchewan's constitutional rights.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan has what the world needs. We have the food, the fuel, and the fertilizer. And we will continue to support Saskatchewan and the people of this province. *The Saskatchewan First Act* enables this government to defend our economy, defend our people, and put Saskatchewan first.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing I want the record to show that I support the motion from my friend and colleague from Lloydminster constituency, and I would encourage the members opposite to do the same and endorse this motion in support of the people of Saskatchewan and the ability for us to defend our economy and jobs for Saskatchewan people.

The motion reads as follows:

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

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this House do now

adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried. This Assembly now adjourns until Monday, 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:19.]

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

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Highways
Minister Responsible for
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Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
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Hon. Jeremy Harrison
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Minister of Immigration and Career Training
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Hon. Paul Merriman
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Hon. Don Morgan
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Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
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Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for
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Saskatchewan Water Corporation
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Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board

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Hon. Dana Skoropad
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Hon. Gordon Wyant
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