



THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

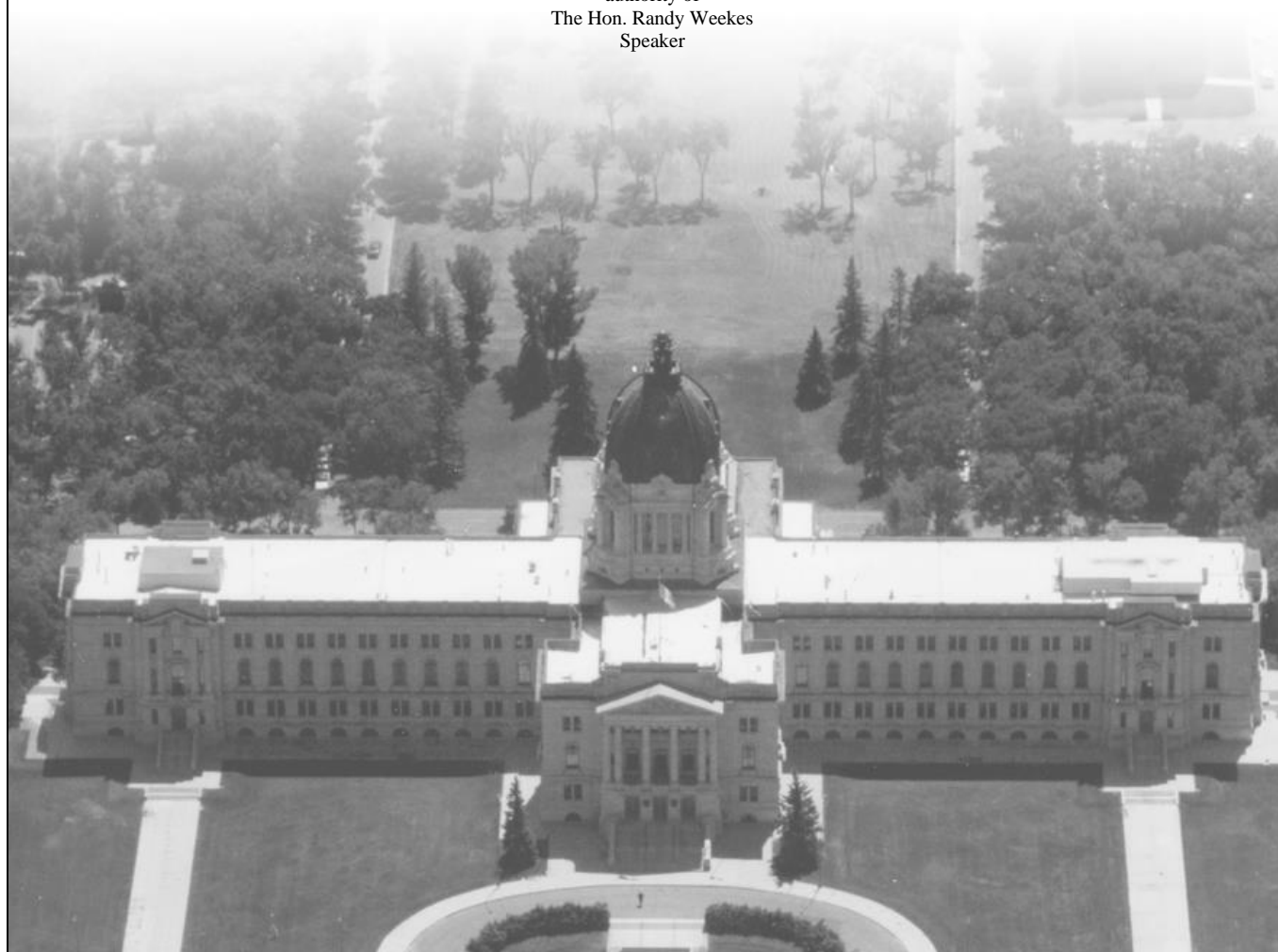
of the

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

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Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1; Vacant — 2

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very, very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple of separate introductions, the first of which is a group of business owners that joins us in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, folks we had a chance to have a very, very good meeting with prior to question period today. I'm talking about some of the labour market challenges, shortages that they are facing, and how we can move forward in an even more exciting way with regard to our provincial nominee program. So I want to introduce them all, and perhaps they can give a bit of a wave when I mention them. But Jigar Patel, who I think well known to this House, welcome. Bharat Prajapati, Chad Zipchian, and Kalpesh Patel, welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

And also while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, a gentleman who needs no introduction who is joining us on the floor: many times elected a Member of Parliament, now nearly 20 years serving the good people of Regina-Qu'Appelle; an incredibly distinguished career in public life; and a dear friend of mine for even before we were elected; having served as the previous Speaker of the House of Commons; having served as the leader of the Conservative party and Leader of the Official Opposition, the Hon. Andrew Scheer.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to rise today and welcome these guests to their Legislative Assembly. It's great to see you here today and, you know, very interested to hear about the labour force challenges, certainly something that we've been hearing, Mr. Speaker, around the province. But first and foremost, simply a welcome, and it's good to see you here in your Legislative Assembly.

While I'm on my feet, also on behalf of the official opposition, acknowledge and welcome MP [Member of Parliament] Scheer to the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to introduce a few friends in your balcony, Michael Linklater and his friend that he's brought along today — they've been in business together — Stephanie Yong. They have stepped out in business and sohkiisiwin Solutions they have started. And it's good for some of our Indigenous businesses to be making and building good relationships with their government.

So Michael, a little background on him. He and I met each other with a love for basketball, and it turned out our relationship's grown with . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . He's a much better player than I am. And our relationship grew, I think with their love for Saskatchewan and its people. And so I've seen great

things. The member from Saskatoon Riversdale is going to give a member's statement about the character that Michael has.

And I just would like to say too, we did play together again. We're both getting older. I think it's your 40th birthday right away, and I've passed 50. But we played the Cornwall Alternative School together, Mr. Speaker, and Michael helped us win the game. So anyways, welcome these two to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — I'd like to join the member opposite to welcome Michael and his partner, guests here. Michael, again as the member said, you're better at basketball than he is, I have no doubt. I also think we'll give this a try, but maybe you'd make a better MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] on this side of the Assembly.

But anyway, having said that, I would like to welcome you as an Indigenous person, a role model. It's amazing what you do to young people back home. You're talked about and you're respected. So I just want to say welcome to your Legislative Assembly, and we honour you that you're here. And I hope we can do whatever we need to do as a province to make sure First Nations and Métis are treated with dignity, respect. I just honour you and would like to welcome you to your Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, it is my pleasure to introduce a person in my life that is very dear and near to my heart. It is my sister; Lynda Chamney is with us today. She truly is a fantastic person. She's there for me through thick and thin. She supports me no matter what I do.

An Hon. Member: — She's the good one in the family.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Yeah, she is the good one in the family. You are 100 per cent correct about that. But yeah, she was just going through Regina today and I said, please stop in and visit the Assembly. So here she is. So through you, would all members please welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Meyers: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would join with the member from Estevan in welcoming family here today. My brother surprised me. He's in the west gallery over there. This is his first visit to the Assembly since I've been elected. So I just wanted to say, you know, given everything that we do in this building — and the Premier and we've all talked about it many times — we don't serve alone. And certainly, certainly in the last few months family has become pretty important. And I just want to welcome him to the Assembly. So if all members could welcome my brother Darcy to the Assembly.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Michael Linklater and Stephanie Yong to their Legislative Assembly. It was a pleasure to see Michael receive the Platinum Jubilee Medal earlier this year. And I want to make a very warm welcome to an old friend, Stephanie Yong. I don't even remember when we first met but have always valued your friendship, and it's exciting to see you up in the Speaker's gallery here today. Thank you so much.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to call 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 is signed by residents of Regina and Wolseley. I do hereby submit.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present our remaining petitions calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to cancel their plans to close the remaining public liquor stores. On March 11th, 2023, nearly a hundred years of government retailing liquor in Saskatchewan came to an end.

That Saturday morning I brought Take Tens and doughnuts to the 8th Street liquor store — affectionately known as the liquor church — and the Confederation liquor store and spent time with the employees on their last shifts before the stores would close to the public later that day. Those employees, with over a hundred years of service amongst them, reminisced about the years they'd spent working in their locations. The grieving process will continue.

So, Mr. Speaker, today I present the remaining petitions, hundreds of signatures of concerned Saskatchewan residents who assert that the Government of Saskatchewan did not run on a platform of privatization.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately reverse the decision to close the remaining 34 public liquor stores.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories today reside in communities across Saskatchewan, including affected communities of Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Biggar, Carlyle, Esterhazy, Moosomin, Nipawin, Melfort, Humboldt, Watrous, Estevan, Creighton, Weyburn, Yorkton, Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Assiniboia, La Loche, Fort Qu'Appelle, and Buffalo Narrows. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities Convention and Trade Show

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another year, another SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] Convention and Trade Show. Mr. Speaker, this is one of the most anticipated events of the year as an MLA. It's an important opportunity for us to build off the relationships we spent the year developing with our rural partners. Whether you're there for the fireside chats, the rural health care forum, or the famed bear-pit, there is something for everyone.

Rural communities are the lifeblood of our province. They take care of the people that produce the high-quality food, fuel, and fertilizer that Saskatchewan is internationally recognized for. As a government, we know that the people who know best are the ones who live and work in their communities, and it is the knowledge and expertise that we can take back to our caucus table and make sure that our decisions reflect what's best for our constituents.

We've had a lot of rural success stories this year and a lot of challenges, but this government is committed to continuing to provide the best services for our residents in partnership with our rural municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking everyone involved with setting up this year's SARM Convention and Trade Show. Here's to another successful convention. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognizing Regina Fire & Protective Services

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today to recognize Regina Fire & Protection Services and their outstanding success in our city, and especially within North Central. Regina Fire responds to more than 9,000 incidents annually. On top of fighting fires they educate the public, respond to hazardous materials, car accidents, water and ice rescues, and so much more.

On November 13th, 2022, first responders worked around the clock to assist the North Central community in response to a

significant explosion at a fourplex unit owned by Saskatchewan Housing Corporation on 6th Avenue and Retallack. It was a terrifying event, but community members were comforted by their presence. Firefighters searched the scene to ensure it was safe and confirmed by no small miracle no victims were in the blast.

Mr. Speaker, Regina Fire is seeing an increase in arson targeting vacant homes. Regina Fire is doing exceptionally well in public education and outreach, which has resulted in some of the lowest accidental fire rates in Regina, including in North Central. That outreach is thanks to good folks like Candace Giblett, a regular and friendly face at the māmawêyatitān centre.

From educating our youth on fire safety to educating communities on escape plans, Regina Fire & Protective Services ensures that all community members are safe and informed on the potential dangers.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Assembly members to join me in recognizing and celebrating the marvellous work of Chief Layne Jackson and Regina Fire. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Northern Communities Welcome Advanced Education Representatives

Mr. Lemaigre: — Mr. Speaker, this winter northern communities had a chance to meet with the University of Regina and Northlands College representatives during one of my northern tours. It was my pleasure to host one of many advanced education engagements in northern Saskatchewan.

The U of R [University of Regina] president, dean of nursing, dean of social work, vice-chancellor, and also the president and CEO [chief executive officer] of Northlands College all had an opportunity to hear from northern leaders. The communities of Pinehouse, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche welcomed us with an opportunity for each community to voice what a collaborative approach to advanced education could look like to their respective community.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, education opportunities in the North, by the North, and for the North was a common message among participants. U of R representatives also met with grade 9 students on our tour. Their department of nursing is offering a mentorship program starting with grade 9 students.

Mr. Speaker, this is what true engagement looks like. It was my privilege, and in partnership I afforded northern communities to have such a critical dialogue with educational representatives. I look forward to touring with the University of Saskatchewan president, the First Nations University of Canada president in the future to see what opportunities we can continue to deliver to northern residents. Growth for the North is growth that works for everyone.

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

Benefit Amounts for Seniors and Disabled Citizens

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As leader of Sask United, I showed last session the government how they were failing seniors who every month find their long-term care home benefit is not enough to pay their fees and incidental living expenses. I also raised the tremendous hardship being faced by disabled people through the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program, which is now a shadow of the original program.

On April 1st, the already well-paid members of this House are scheduled for a 6.8 per cent raise because their salaries are tied to the consumer price index. That would have given each MLA a raise of \$7,000 or more a year. Seven thousand dollars is more than half of what a single person on SAID gets in a whole year for their rent and living expenses, Mr. Speaker. That's right. A single person on SAID gets as little as \$11,172 a year with no hope for a raise. In fact, Mr. Speaker, seniors had their benefits clawed back because they got a raise from the federal government.

As budget day approaches, I urge this government to give our seniors and disabled citizens a raise and index those benefits to the CPI [consumer price index] so they can live with dignity now and in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Fifth Flight of Displaced Ukrainians to Arrive in Saskatchewan

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Speaker, this morning we announced our fifth flight carrying displaced Ukrainians is open for registration and will arrive in Saskatchewan on March 27th. This flight is being arranged in partnership with the humanitarian organization Solidaire and Open Arms. This fifth flight will complete the current memorandum of understanding which was signed in August 12th of 2022 by Premier Scott Moe and representatives of Solidaire and Open Arms. Upon arrival in Saskatchewan, passengers will access temporary accommodations along with services, support, and information related to living in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to supporting Ukrainians who have been displaced due to the Russian invasion in Ukraine. It is vital that we continue to denounce the actions of Russia and support the resolution of this war where Ukrainian territorial integrity is maintained. Saskatchewan approach to welcoming Ukrainian citizens is unique and speaks to Saskatchewan's character. We are proud, Mr. Speaker, that in true Saskatchewan fashion Ukrainians have been met with an outpour of support and kindness. Slava Ukraine.

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

Back to Batoche Days Celebrates 50 Years

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last July I had the privilege of bringing greetings at the Métis Nation Back to Batoche 50th Anniversary celebration. This was the first Back to Batoche Days that was held in person after two years of online

celebrations. The Back to Batoche festival began in 1970 as an opportunity for the Métis people to share their rich and resilient culture and the significant role the Métis have played in Canadian history.

It is also an opportunity to honour the Métis veterans and reconnect to the land where our Métis ancestors fought in the 1885 Northwest Resistance to defend and protect the Métis way of life.

Mr. Speaker, this year there were many storytelling events, games, and performances on multiple stages that celebrated the Métis culture. 2022 was a year of significant importance to the Métis — 690 hectares of land on the west side of the Batoche National Historic Site was transferred from Parks Canada to the citizens of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan.

This was such an important milestone in reconciliation. These lands hold the cultural, spiritual, and historic significance to the citizens of MNS [Métis Nation of Saskatchewan]. By transferring this land back to its stewards, the Métis Nation can continue to preserve this land for future generations. My daughters and I are proud Métis Nation-Saskatchewan members.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan on this historic land transfer and another successful Back to Batoche Days. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Capital Investment in Saskatchewan

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Consumer confidence in capital investment in Saskatchewan continues to increase. In 2023 Saskatchewan is expected to see capital investment experience an increase of over 20 per cent from the year prior. This means \$17.32 billion in capital investment being spent here in our province, and that's on top of a 20 per cent increase in 2022 over '21.

And as far as national rankings go, we're not third; we're not second; we're first in the nation in capital investment, Mr. Speaker, more than double every other province in Canada.

That's more private investments in agriculture, 1.6 billion; manufacturing, 1 billion; mining and oil and gas, 5.5 billion; construction and other services, 2.5 billion; and public services, 3.2 billion.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's not all. We're also first in building construction investment with a 21.5 per cent increase in investment in January of 2023 compared to January of last year. That's a total of 399 million invested into building construction in January of this year. These billions in investments mean more jobs, more opportunities in every sector of our economy and every area of the province. That's growth that works for everyone.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Provision of Health Care in Rural Communities

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government is failing to deliver on health care, and nowhere is that more apparent than in rural communities. Under this government, rural hospitals have been shuttered where they should be open and providing care. Mr. Speaker, this is a government that has been in power for 15 years. They created this mess and they should be the ones to own their own record.

My question is this: why should rural people in this province accept being turned away from their local hospitals when what they really need is care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of initiatives that have been put forward by these Health ministers, both Health ministers over the course of the last number of months, as we work with other provinces on some of the challenges that we are facing as a nation in a post-pandemic world, Mr. Speaker.

What we have done in this province to increase the number of front-line caregivers that we have is come forward with a four-point plan, Mr. Speaker. And that four-point plan, I would suggest, is landing people in our health care centres in urban Saskatchewan as well as in our rural communities. In addition to supporting where and how that four-point plan is effective, in particular in our rural areas of the province, Mr. Speaker, both our Health ministers have engaged with SARM as recently as a couple of weeks ago. Sorry, pardon me. They were up in Saskatoon engaging with the SARM delegation at the SARM conference this morning.

Engaged with the board a couple of weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, have committed to engaging with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities on a regular basis moving forward. That's in addition to the 45-plus rural communities that they visited over the course of this past year, Mr. Speaker. This is growth that most certainly is going to work for everyone in this province.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, let me paint a little picture about what health care looks like in rural Saskatchewan under the Sask Party government: a woman forced to give birth on the side of the road because services were not available in Meadow Lake; dozens turning out to a public town hall in Delisle, and no one from that government even bothered to show up; a sign posted in the hospital at Kamsack telling people to go down the road to Canora, and if you went to Canora you would find a sign telling you to go to Kamsack.

Mr. Speaker, this is their record. It's unacceptable. At the very least, will that government commit to bringing local voices back to health care, something that community leaders have been asking for?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to listening to local

voices, as I said, both Health ministers and a number of other ministers were just at the SARM convention as recently as this morning.

Mr. Speaker, also when it comes to members on this side of the House, we don't go on a tour. We don't go out just visiting rural communities. We actually live in those communities right across the province. We call that consultation with rural communities — rural people in those communities — we call that going home on the weekends, Mr. Speaker, is what we call that.

And what health care in rural Saskatchewan looks like is an increase in services in the community of North Battleford, in the community of Humboldt, Esterhazy, Kamsack, Radville, Assiniboia, Biggar, Weyburn, Preeceville, Cabri, Balcarres, Wilkie. In my community of Shellbrook, we increased our bed count by five beds there, Mr. Speaker, as well as in Redvers, Porcupine Plain. And I have a number of comments here from local leaders that I'd like to read in subsequent questions.

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

Employment Numbers

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, shocking amount of arrogance, although I suppose it's not shocking at this point. This is a premier that's been in office for five years, and he needs to take . . . responsible for his failure to deliver, failure to deliver on health care and failing to deliver on jobs.

It's all related, Mr. Speaker. When people can't access what they need, be it in health care, in child care, or an affordable cost of living, it makes it harder for people to get to work. And it makes it harder for companies in this province, small-business owners, to hire and grow their businesses.

Does this tired, out-of-touch Sask Party government not understand that their worst-in-the-nation jobs record is tied directly to their failures on things like health care and on child care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, those are actually two areas where we have chosen to work with the federal government. There are many areas where we have disagreements with the federal government, but we have chosen these two areas, as they in the short term most certainly do have a benefit to the people of Saskatchewan. And we most certainly will put the people of Saskatchewan's interests first, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to jobs, as I said yesterday 2,600 additional jobs recorded in our month-over-month. That's 9,400 jobs year over year in this province, Mr. Speaker, most certainly is leading Canada or second in the nation of Canada. And many of those jobs are in our health care facilities across the province, Mr. Speaker.

And I just quote Mayor Nancy Brunt from Kamsack, who says this: "It is generally good news, and I'm happy to see the government is working harder to recruit staff. It makes me much more hopeful."

Mr. Speaker, in Assiniboia, Mayor Schauenberg says, "We appreciate yours and your government's support, Minister Hindley, as we work to find solutions for other rural health care shortages."

Mr. Speaker, as I said, this is a government that represents rural Saskatchewan. This is a government and government members that go home each and every weekend to have conversations and to find solutions with rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And we do it more officially with our official engagements with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities.

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

Access to Child Care Spaces

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, we're joined today by people who operate child care centres in Saskatchewan. They're here because this government's new child care announcements with the feds isn't working for them.

And as we hear time and time again with this government, this tired and out-of-touch government, they weren't consulted at all before that announcement was made. And now, Mr. Speaker, they may be forced to turn away families who rely on part-time spaces and are looking at doing more with less.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister think that it's acceptable to have parents losing child care spaces because he failed to listen to people on the front lines delivering child care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, may I just begin by thanking our visitors today for what they do each and every day with our youth. And let me just make some comments that we share in their frustration of a lack of consultation not only with the child care . . . with the lack of consultation, Mr. Speaker, because we felt a lack of consultation with the introduction of this policy as well from the federal government.

However we do see the opportunity to provide a higher level of funding to our child care centres across the province, Mr. Speaker. That's why we were the third province to sign and to move forward in moving our child care rates to \$10 here in this province of Saskatchewan. That's why in large portion, we're able to continue to increase the number of spaces that we have been increasing for a number of years now, Mr. Speaker. We're at 22,884 spaces. Last November, we increased over 2,000 spaces.

[14:00]

However in saying all of that, Mr. Speaker, with this agreement that, yes, we did move forward, we signed with the federal government — the members opposite wanted us to sign it much sooner before we had the details — there are some challenges with respect to the parameters that the federal government has.

The minister's working carefully and closely with the federal minister, as recently as this past week has reached out again to try to address a number of those challenges, Mr. Speaker. But that being said, today in Saskatchewan, child care is more

affordable. There are more spaces. And for our child care providers, there's more training, there's more work opportunities, and there's a higher level of wages in the sector.

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

Ms. Beck: — This is a tired and out-of-touch government that is failing to deliver, pushing part-time parents out of child care spaces that don't exist is going to force more people — mostly women — out of their jobs. People need more jobs and bigger paycheques in this province, Mr. Speaker, but leaving moms without the child care they need isn't going to get us there.

Doesn't the minister realize that forcing parents and kids out of child care that they need is bad for families, Mr. Speaker? It's also bad for our economy.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the intention is not to limit access to child care services for families who require less than full-time care, and the move to full-time and daily fees is not intended to impact the number of children, Mr. Speaker.

We will continue to work with child care facilities to best determine how to adjust the fee structures in order to adhere to the new \$217.50 per month or \$10 a day. In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, as we are working through this with facilities, the ministry will continue to provide funding based on the total number of children under the age of six enrolled until June 30th of this summer.

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

Ms. Conway: — [Inaudible] . . . Mr. Speaker, it is so disappointing to hear a premier incapable of taking responsibility for a single decision made by his government.

And as the minister just said, this may have not been the intention, but this is what's happened. And it wouldn't have happened had they consulted with these child care providers. These child care providers would not be seated in your gallery — they wouldn't have made their way from Saskatoon, from Whitewood, to represent Moosomin and Carnduff, and come to Regina — if that minister had picked up the phone and spoken to them.

They have serious concerns about the impact of this child care announcement and the impact it will have on the families that rely on them for care. Unless this government starts listening, they may be forced to reduce the total number of kids they can care for, which means more families will be scrambling over fewer spaces.

Will the minister guarantee that no families will lose their space because of this announcement?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — [Inaudible] . . . Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education has been in close consultations with child care

facilities across this province, including organizations such as the Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association.

Mr. Speaker, certainly when we signed the deal, we looked to have an increasing amount of flexibility. This is something that I've communicated with the minister as recently as last week, Mr. Speaker. And this is one of the challenges, as we're essentially running a child care system and have a federal government that doesn't run child care insert themselves into this area. We're trying to reconfigure the plane while it's still in the air, Mr. Speaker. This has caused some challenges along the way. That's why we're working with the industry as we adopt the \$10 a day or 217.50 per month, Mr. Speaker, and ensure that children are not left without a space.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, consultation after the announcement is not consultation, okay? And SECA [Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association] is one important piece of the puzzle, but they are not the only piece. And we wouldn't have the Vice-Chair of the southeast Saskatchewan directors' association with us in the legislature today if that minister did indeed consult with child care providers.

Ten dollars a day makes for a great headline, Mr. Speaker, there's no question. But details matter, and when this government doesn't listen to the front lines those details get missed. The parents of kids in part-time care don't have anywhere to go. Wait times for full-time spots can be months long, even more than a year. Does the minister realize that access to a wait-list is not access to child care? What's the plan to create more spaces, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well the plan is utilizing not only the provincial dollars that we've already put in place, Mr. Speaker, as well as the federal dollars through both bilateral agreements that we do have that does see Saskatchewan now have 114 per cent more child care spaces than we did 15 years ago, including 2,200 new child care spaces that we announced in November on top of the over 2,000 that we announced last March, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as we are implementing the bilateral agreement — the Canada-Saskatchewan bilateral agreement that does allow us to move to \$10 a day, which as the Premier has indicated, we're the third province to do so — within that agreement, we are continuing to look for additional flexibility so that we can avoid some of the problems that the federal agreement causes, Mr. Speaker. So we know the challenges that have been identified, and we need to work with the federal government to be able to tailor the plan in Saskatchewan in that agreement with the sector that works, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Okay, Mr. Speaker, but this tired and out-of-touch government could have avoided that mess had they simply actually listened. If they had picked up the phone and worked

with providers, they could have found solutions that worked for local communities, for all communities — not just in southeast Regina, but in southeast Saskatchewan as well.

But this is what we've come to expect from a 15-year-old government that thinks they don't need to listen anymore, that they just can make an announcement and then consult, Mr. Speaker. Plans drawn up in Regina and Ottawa with no input from front-line providers in places like Saskatoon, Whitewood, Carnduff, Moosomin, Mr. Speaker.

How did the minister bungle this announcement so badly? Why didn't he work with those who actually provide child care in Saskatchewan? And will he agree to meet with these providers today to hear their concerns?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely I would be happy to meet with the providers that are here today. Again, as I said in my first answer, the intention certainly not to see anyone left without a space, Mr. Speaker. That's why certainly we're working hard to not only lower the fees within the agreement but also increase the number of spaces across the province, Mr. Speaker.

We are aware of the challenges, Mr. Speaker, that have arisen now that we have achieved the \$10 a day. We are working through that. We are providing an additional month of funding, Mr. Speaker, so that those centres have the funding that they do have while we are addressing this problem with the industry.

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

Funding for Post-Secondary Education

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and washed-up Sask Party government doesn't have the foggiest clue about how to build an economy. If they did . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yeah, it is a joke. It is a joke. If they did, they wouldn't be throwing child care centres into chaos. They wouldn't be leaving the U of R to fend for itself as budget cuts loom over that institution.

We need real opportunities for young people in Saskatchewan, but saddling students with more and more tuition hikes to get less education does the exact opposite. Education, Mr. Speaker, is an investment. It's an investment in the future of our province. It's an investment in our youth. It is not a cost, which is how this government treats it. How is it that this Sask Party government does not realize that?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government understands the importance of education to the future of this province. We understand the investments that we make in K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education and in post-secondary education are the key to the future of this economy, the key to the future of this province, Mr. Speaker. We invest in our post-secondary institutions, the two major universities, Mr. Speaker, a million dollars a day in post-secondary funding to those two

institutions.

I continue to have conversations with the president of the University of Regina with respect to his budget, Mr. Speaker. I met with him yesterday. Tomorrow I'll be meeting with the president of the faculty association to hear her concerns, Mr. Speaker. But until the budget of the University of Regina is finalized, Mr. Speaker, there's really nothing to give any consideration to.

We'll continue to work with our post-secondary institutions to make sure that we're providing the best support we can for the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, recognizing the importance of these institutions to the future of this province.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, zero per cent increases in their multi-year funding agreement during a time of an inflationary crisis — that's this government's investment. Cuts to funding all while this government sits on windfall revenues. You'd think a government with the worst economic record in Canada would inject money into training young people to be able to stay in this province, to stay in their home province, to buy a house, and to make this province their home for the long term. But they won't. Why won't the government step up to prevent cuts to programs, staff, and supports for the U of R?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, we haven't seen the final budget from the University of Regina. The president of the university hasn't asked for any additional funding, Mr. Speaker. And until we see the final results of that budget — and I have, as I mentioned in this House before, every confidence in the president of the University of Regina and his staff to do what's right, not just for his budget but for the students and the faculty at that university — we'll continue to wait and we'll continue to work with the administration.

My officials, Mr. Speaker, from the Ministry of Advanced Education, are meeting with officials from the University of Regina tomorrow, and I'm committed to continuing to have these conversations not just with the University of Regina but with the University of Saskatchewan, with Sask Polytech, with our regional colleges, recognizing the importance, the very, very important importance of those institutions, Mr. Speaker, to the very future of this province.

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

Ms. Bowes: — There have been calls for emergency funding for the U of R. That's absolutely the call that Britt Hall, president of URFA [University of Regina Faculty Association], made when she was here last week in this legislature, and that minister knows it. So we need a prevention of budget cuts. Those calls are being made across the board.

Funding increases that we've seen in Manitoba, our neighbour, our Conservative neighbour; funding increases of 11 per cent that

have been announced by that Conservative government; increases in student aid by 17 per cent — that's real investment. That Conservative government seems to be getting it, Mr. Speaker. Their Finance minister even said the majority of new jobs will require advanced education. It's obvious.

So why doesn't this conservative government get it? Why don't they get it? Why don't they recognize investment in universities as the key to future economic growth?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, here's the reality: \$116.8 million in operating funds to the University of Regina last year; another \$6.5 million in preventative maintenance and renewal; \$430,000 for the nursing expansion.

Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible] . . . all I want from the president of the faculty association. The president of the university hasn't asked for any additional money. So it's not surprising that the faculty association would do that but until I hear from the president of the university, Mr. Speaker, then we'll take some steps.

Mr. Speaker, here is the reality: a multi-year funding agreement with our post-secondary institutions, all of which were very, very happy to sign that four years ago. Here's a quote from the member from Saskatoon University: "Was the agreement historic? It certainly was. The institutions have been asking for multi-year funding, and it's very important to these institutions."

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to have a dialogue with our . . . Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to have conversations with the universities, with our entire post-secondary sector, to make sure that we're doing what's right for students and for faculty.

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

Private Delivery of Health Care

Mr. Teed: — Mr. Speaker, this is a tired and out-of-touch government that isn't listening to universities, it's not listening to health care workers, and it's not listening to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people paid nearly a million dollars out of their own pockets to get MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging]. And Health Canada clawed every penny back because the provincial government broke the law. They broke the *Canada Health Act* with their two tiered private-pay system. The people of Saskatchewan cannot afford this predatory model, and the provincial government can't afford to keep breaking laws.

When will the government scrap this failed private-pay system that has actually made wait times longer?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, it's just amazing how quick they are to pop up and support Justin Trudeau and

everything they're doing out of Ottawa. Absolutely amazing how they pop up and support that coalition government.

Mr. Speaker, we've talked about this time and time again. The MRI system that is working . . . These are 28,000 people that have got their scans done, Mr. Speaker, and sped up the process to be able to get their surgeries done or their treatments done.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health and myself were just up at SARM. This was specifically brought up by one of the councillors at SARM that said, we are very proud of this government to stand up to the federal government and allow us to have private scans and private surgeries. Everybody else seems to be on board with this but those dozen over there, Mr. Speaker.

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

Government Support of Harm Reduction

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the overdose crisis continues to take more lives in communities across this province. The latest numbers from the coroner's office show that 103 people have died from overdose in the last two months. That's almost as many as the total number of people who died in all of 2016: 109.

This government has failed to support harm reduction time and time again, which we know saves lives so people can get on the path to recovery. But this government has failed to deliver funding for harm reduction now for years. And for years, people have died needlessly. Will the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions commit today to funding harm reduction finally in this budget? People are watching. Yes or no?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government takes this issue very, very seriously, which is why over the past number of years this government has invested \$3.8 million specifically into a number of harm-reduction initiatives across this province, Mr. Speaker.

That includes a number of initiatives that are both one-time but also annualized funding for harm reduction, Mr. Speaker, whether it's expansion of the take-home naloxone program, the procurement of four mass spectrometer drug-checking devices which are now operational in a couple of communities and will soon be operational in all four, Mr. Speaker.

We have a number of dollars affiliated and sent and directed towards the drug task force, which has a number of representatives from across this province, Mr. Speaker, that has done work and consultation, extensive consultation across Saskatchewan with community leaders, with those that are involved in this area and those with lived experience as well, Mr. Speaker, that know how important this is to make sure that we are doing everything that we can to provide not only harm-reduction supports but also long-term treatment and recovery options for the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Support for Bail Reform

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week I joined my provincial and territorial colleagues in Ottawa in a united call to the federal government to reform bail in Canada. The bail system is at a breaking point. Only one-third of Canadians have confidence in our criminal courts. Across the country we have seen some tragic manifestations of repeat violent offenders being released on bail, most recently leading to the death of Ontario Provincial Police Constable Grzegorz Pierzchala.

As a result, every single Canadian premier, including our Premier, wrote to the Prime Minister in January calling on the federal government to establish a reverse onus on bail for repeat violent offenders charged with serious gun crimes and to reform the bail system.

Last week in Ottawa, colleagues and I raised important issues with federal Minister of Justice and Attorney General David Lametti and Minister of Public Safety Marco Mendicino. We spoke about some of the deeply concerning threats to public safety our country has come to experience, including those that result from amendments to bail laws in Bill C-75 which came into effect in December 2019.

Bill C-75 effectively ties the hands of prosecutors and judges across Canada by codifying the presumption of so-called catch-and-release directly into the Criminal Code. This is especially apparent in the new section 493.1, which was added through Bill C-75. This section requires police, prosecutors, and judges to consider release of any accused at the, quote, earliest available opportunity under the least onerous conditions. The ease with which repeat violent offenders are currently able to secure bail raises serious concerns about public safety and confidence in the justice system. Mr. Speaker, the pendulum has swung too far.

Last week in Ottawa, Saskatchewan put forward potential amendments to the Criminal Code to hold repeat violent offenders accountable, improve public safety, and restore Canadians' confidence in the justice system. We propose creating reverse onuses on bail for repeat violent offenders, strengthening language around the importance of community safety, and requiring judges to provide written consideration of the impacts to public safety when releasing violent offenders on bail.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Minister Lametti made a positive commitment to move forward quickly to introduce amendments to the Criminal Code that would strengthen public safety, target repeat violent offenders, and address concerns about serious offences committed with firearms and other dangerous weapons. Significantly, he called this commitment the result of "good faith collaboration by all levels of government to address the needs posed by repeat violent offenders." And we look forward, Mr. Speaker, to reviewing the federal government's response to the concerns we have raised and continuing the ongoing discussion about public safety and

confidence in the justice system.

Here in Saskatchewan we are also reviewing provincial bail policies to ensure Saskatchewan prosecutors are confident in their authority to oppose bail for repeat violent offenders. The province is releasing an updated provincial bail policy which builds on existing practice and policies that Crown prosecutors must already consider where public safety is at risk, including high-risk offences, those involving intimate partner violence, and children and vulnerable adults.

While respecting prosecutorial discretion above all, I have requested that the new policy explicitly emphasize that where any of the conditions for refusing bail are met, prosecutors should advocate for the detention of repeat violent offenders, in particular, awaiting trial.

The new provisions, under the heading "Safe communities: protecting public safety and confidence in Saskatchewan's justice system," explicitly state that in certain circumstances it is not only appropriate but necessary that Crown counsel take a more stringent approach to bail. When a repeat violent offender is charged with an offence against a person or involving a weapon, Crown counsel must seek that person's detention unless they are satisfied, having regard to all the circumstances, that the risk to public safety posed by the accused's release can be reduced to an acceptable level by bail conditions.

In considering the risk to public safety, a Crown prosecutor must consider whether any factors indicate a risk that needs to be addressed, including whether at the time of arrest the accused had one or more outstanding criminal charges alleging an offence against a person or involving a weapon; had breached a condition of recognizance or weapons prohibition; was subject to any court orders, reverse onus provisions; and/or has a history of convictions related to violence, weapons, or endangering the public.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet to provide responses to this ministerial statement on behalf, partly, of my colleague, the member from Douglas Park, the critic for this area.

It's certainly interesting to see the government move on bail reform, potentially in the Criminal Code, in response to this ask from 10 provinces across the country, Mr. Speaker. And we on this side will be watching closely to see what the federal government proposes and brings forward on that note.

When it comes to this new provincial bail policy that the minister has outlined, what struck me immediately upon reading it is it appears to be a reiteration of what prosecutors are already taking into account in bail hearings today. Of course there are three grounds to hold someone on bail. If they're a flight risk, that's the first ground that an accused person can be held on bail. There is risk of reoffence and that public safety element, Mr. Speaker. And then of course there's the tertiary ground, which is that the release of this person might undermine the public confidence in

the administration of justice.

So just important to really outline what exists today, because we have a government with a track record of making announcements that don't necessarily reflect a deviation, even from the current state of affairs, Mr. Speaker.

If the government's intention is to make bail more difficult to access in Saskatchewan, it does beg the question, where will these people go? Our remand centres are bursting at the seam, Mr. Speaker. We have some of the highest incarceration rates in democracies across the world. And it's an important opportunity always when we talk about incarceration rates in Saskatchewan to talk about that shameful statistic that 75 per cent of incarcerated folks are Indigenous when they only represent 17 per cent of the population, Mr. Speaker. What is this government doing to address that? And what resources are going to be put in place to reduce the rate at which people on remand are reoffending, Mr. Speaker?

It also raises questions around the independence of prosecutions. And I would note particularly around this commitment on the part of the minister to release an updated provincial bail policy and that she personally requested that a new policy be explicitly communicated to prosecutors.

We've seen this government try to get the Regina police to kick off Tristen Durocher from the west lawn, and take over the legislative security through Bill 70. We've seen the attempts at creating a marshals service now, Mr. Speaker. So we know they don't have a great track record on separation of powers. Crown discretion, the discretion of Crown prosecutors and their independence is key to a democracy, Mr. Speaker. So a word of caution there certainly, Mr. Speaker.

With that I'll close my statements. I want to thank the minister for providing us a copy of the statement in advance of today's proceedings.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Ms. C. Young: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 95, *The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Amendment Act, 2022* without amendment.

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

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

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 95 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

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

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 108

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 108 — *The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet to provide comment on Bill 108, which is actually something I've already done on second reading, Mr. Speaker. I just want to reiterate before this bill moves to committee that our critic, the member for Regina Rosemont, the official critic for Finance, will be engaged in consultation on this bill to ensure that there are no unintended consequences.

There is little more important, of course, Mr. Speaker, than the integrity, the protection, and the performance of one's pension. And unfortunately there are far too many people and individuals across this province today who don't have the security of a pension, Mr. Speaker. But certainly those who do have one would without a doubt agree that there's little more important in their life that they're watching for that security in old age, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, we on this side will look forward to scrutinizing this

bill further in committee.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member that Bill No. 108 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 125

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carr that **Bill No. 125 — *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to discuss Bill 125. I want to quickly thank my colleagues for the thoughtful comments they've put on the record in regards to this bill. I also want to thank my Indigenous colleagues for their remarks and weighing in.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to engage stakeholders on this bill, but as my colleague has already mentioned, I also have already made comments on the record for Bill 125, the cannabis control Act. We will continue to engage with stakeholders, and we will have a lot more questions to ask the minister and the ministry officials in committee. Lastly I'll just say that any time we can enshrine self-governance for First Nations into legislation is always welcome on our side.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to see this bill move to committee.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member that Bill No. 109 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 109

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 109 — *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2022 (No. 2)*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on Bill No. 109, *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2022*.

Initially, Mr. Speaker, I know there's definitely some concerns that have been raised, you know, with government federal employees going onto homeowners' lands, lands that belong to and property that belong to residents of our province. Unfortunately I guess we want and hope we would respect our landowners, and they have the rights to protect their land and be notified and permission asked of them when somebody's entering their land, whether it be a provincial government, a federal government. I think that's very important.

Initially we agree with that as, you know, opposition. We agree with landowners having the rights and being treated with respect when it comes to permission to enter their property.

So there's different ways, and I know through . . . Our critic will have many questions. She's going to be consulting with individuals. But I guess sometimes there are certain government agencies that have the ability for certain reasons to enter property. And I guess as long as the law's being followed . . . And that's why I guess this legislation is coming forward.

We're hoping that, you know, at the end of the day, we will take the opportunity and I know the critic for Justice will take the opportunity to consult with individuals, because we see a pattern here of a government who does not consult with many people. And I'm thinking of our First Nations and Métis citizens who truly do not get consulted. This government brings up legislation and doesn't consult with them, doesn't talk to them, doesn't treat them with the respect that they deserve as traditional landholders of our lands, the traditional lands to hunt, fish, gather.

As my grandchildren, you know, the next generation, my great-grandchildren, the next generation have inherent rights and should be respected. But we have a government that constantly brings in legislation and does not consult. And they wonder why First Nations and Métis people say they're tired. They're tired of government who does not respect them, who does not sit at the table with them. They're tired of it. So at the end of the day, I just remind, you know.

And I know our colleague for Justice, the critic, will definitely be asking some tough questions in committee when this bill goes to committee. But for now, I know more of my colleagues have more to talk about Bill 109, so I'm prepared at this time to adjourn debate on Bill 109, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 116

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Marit that **Bill No. 116 — *The Plant Health Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Happy to enter into adjourned debate on behalf of the official opposition with respect to Bill 116, *The Plant Health Act*. Mr. Speaker, with this bill the minister will have the ability to declare any animal, any insect, or disease that presents a danger to plants or crops as a pest. The minister can accordingly appoint pest control officers, order the destruction of at-risk plants, and declare a state of emergency as needed.

Mr. Speaker, especially given the importance of our agricultural sector to this province, certainly it is important to prevent and contain any pests that present a threat to our farmers' crops and to properly protect our agricultural industry and its integrity. There's no question about this. The implications for food security in Saskatchewan and the broader implications of food security across our country are very, very at stake here, as well as the affordability of food, which we've seen become a growing concern for average people across this province.

I will say it is rather telling however, Mr. Speaker, to note that this bill will allow municipal and provincial pest control officers essentially unfettered access to any land suspected of harbouring pests. This in very stark contrast to this government's trespass to property amendment Act, which bans federal agents from those same rights to land access to do their jobs.

I'll note again for the record that these federal agents are Saskatchewan workers. They have felt intimidated by the amped-up rhetoric that we've seen around the government's trespass to property amendment Act, which is really unfortunate to see those kind of pots being stirred just for cheap political points at the expense of Saskatchewan workers by the Minister for Water Security Agency and his colleagues.

It's quite telling indeed, the stark contrast between these two bills, these two pieces of legislation that this government has brought forward one after the other. And with that glaring disparity being flagged for the record and leaving our loyal viewers at home to draw their own conclusions, I will now move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 116, *The Plant Health Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 117

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 117 — *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on this legislation, this bill introduced by the government, Bill 117, *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*. Initially I know the government was responding to the federal government and changes the government is trying to do with, you know, people who own firearms in the province and through Canada. And for whatever reason, they went through a process and decided how they're going to do it.

Lo and behold, you know, here's a provincial government who comes up with legislation, you know, Bill 117, the firearms legislation Act. When I initially think about it, and you know, you think, what's the government up to? What's the provincial government up to? Because they always like attacking the federal government for not consulting the provinces, for not consulting people. But here's a government, Sask Party government, provincial government who constantly does not consult so many different groups.

But I want to talk about one group that they . . . Well let's talk about two groups: the Indigenous people, our First Nations, our Métis leaders, our residents. They never get consulted. This government has failed miserably and each time, and here you go again. Another piece of legislation this government introduces, does not consult with FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations], does not consult I'm assuming with the Métis. Why is that?

Why does this government keep coming up with legislation, want to make amendments, and say on one hand, we're going to protect Saskatchewan but we don't think we have to consult First Nations and Métis? And why is FSIN saying very clearly that they were not consulted, they were not talked to? Why is that?

And you know, you want to talk about members opposite. We know that our First Nations, our Indigenous members on this side constantly are raising the alarm bells to try to say to government, you have to start respecting our First Nations and Métis. You have to start consulting.

You know, how many times do you have to be taken to court as a government, wasting dollars that could help the most vulnerable people, could help vulnerable people? But no, we're spending dollars upon dollars. And I don't know if it's thousands, hundreds of thousands. I don't know if it's millions fighting First Nations and Métis, fighting people who truly have a right to the land, the traditional lands that are theirs, the Métis, First Nations. But unfortunately, you know, you have a government that does whatever.

So I'm going to call out if anybody in here self-declares or says you're Indigenous, please speak up. Speak up and tell the government, look, you have to start consulting First Nations and Métis. But the government continues to do it time and time again. Members on government side, opposition members, or members

opposite should not have to go out to communities, to First Nations and Métis and tell them about how sad a government legislation is without consulting and talking with them.

Why is that? How come we don't have . . . We shouldn't have to fight as Indigenous people to say, please listen. Just work with First Nations and Métis. That's all they're asking. Consult with them. Sit down. Why do you guys find it so hard to do that? I do not understand it. And I know they're frustrated. They don't understand it. But I guess, you know, the only way that you understand it is every time you're taken to court. But again, that costs money.

And they're getting tired. And I hear leaders saying, enough. I hear our elders talking about it. I've heard many leaders. I've heard many different organizations that work within First Nations and Métis communities who are saying, why isn't the government not consulting? Why do they come up with legislation and then want to go and talk? Oh, yeah, we should have sat down and talked with you first.

Here you go. You have another bill, *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*, that First Nations and Métis . . . I'm assuming the Métis weren't consulted either. But you know what, I'll leave that for our critic to ask those questions. And I know that the critic will be asking those organizations, were you consulted when this government come up with this legislation.

So time and time again, it actually gets very tiresome to have to remind the government that First Nations and Métis people have inherent rights to the land. They have those rights, but you don't respect their rights. Why is that? Why do you not respect them? And if you say you do respect them, they wouldn't be having to say they were not consulted on this piece of legislation or many other pieces of legislation, like Bill 88. The list goes on.

I think the government, you're starting to take Indigenous people for granted. And I'm going to tell you, you're going to wake them up. They're tired. They are tired of being disrespected, not treated with dignity and respect. Well you can mock all you want. You go ahead and mock on that side all you want. You think it's funny? I don't find it funny. You know, you go ahead. You do what you want. Make your mocks. Go ahead.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, this is why there's so much frustration. And again, I'm proud of First Nations and Métis leaders. They're finally coming forward and saying, enough. We've tried to work with the leaders, with the government. As leaders we've tried to tell them about our concerns, but here's a government . . . And I'm glad that they're being vocal. I'm glad that they're speaking out. And I hope more of them come out and speak out and say, enough.

And I hope that they take this government . . . Again, they shouldn't have to take a government to court to give them the respect. The treaties that they've signed shouldn't have to be taken to court, a government to court. But I guess that's what you're allowing to happen as a government.

You could change things. You could actually consult with them. Meaningful consultation, not your bill that you have right now, you know, that you came up in 2010. Oh, if this happens and that happens and it triggers, oh we'll consult with you. But they

rejected that twice. They have rejected, First Nations and Métis have rejected it.

It's amazing to see how leaders are starting to wake up and say, enough. They have tried to work with the government, but you know, again I just want to say to those leaders, to the young people, the youth, our young First Nations and Métis citizens who are saying, enough. They're starting to educate themselves and understand if they want to go hunting and fishing — their traditional rights — what are going to be left? You guys are selling off all the land too. But do you consult them? No, no. But they have to, they have to.

And I give, you know, my colleague the critic for First Nations and Métis relations, you know, Saskatoon Centre, I give her so much credit. She speaks the truth. She speaks truth to what's going on and that the alarm bells are being rang. And I am glad that she's doing what she's doing to wake up our Indigenous community, to wake up our First Nation and Métis brothers and sisters to say, enough. We need to stand up.

[14:45]

So I want to just, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to take more time because again, it goes back and time and time again it's about respect, showing respect as a government to Indigenous people. And we see that the government fails miserably, lacks . . . You should be actually ashamed of yourselves the way some of the legislation that comes in without consulting. But that's a pattern in government, it doesn't matter if it's First Nations, Métis.

It looks like in many of the legislations we find that people are saying they were not, they were not consulted. They were not talked to, not even a phone call. And we seen that today in question period. We have groups, again, when it comes to certain changes to legislation, announcements when the government wants to have photo ops or a good news story for a day but doesn't consult with people, and then wonders why people have to come into the gallery in protest to say hey, this is failing. We're going to have families with child care that are not going to . . .

So I know I'm going off the bill a little bit, but it's just to show the pattern our government of 15 . . . I kept saying 16 years. I owe an apology to the government, you know. I said 16 years, but apparently it might be 15 years and some months. So I'll correct that, that you've been government. And man, you have work to do. You have failed.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to move adjournment on Bill 117, *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 118

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 118** — *The Warrant Compliance Act* be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on this bill. You know, I talked to a few of my colleagues just to get an understanding of what exactly this legislation, *The Warrant Compliance Act*, is because I was trying to understand. And I know at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, I keep saying the First Nations, Métis citizens, anyone that lives in our province, if this legislation comes forward that impacts those citizens, they should have been consulted by the government. The government should do that.

And sometimes, you know what, I'll say legislation that comes forward is something that is good for citizens. And we need legislation, and we need some of the legislation that's being passed that protects citizens of this great province, and I agree with that. And sometimes legislation is done, we've actually, actually co-operated on some legislation. Very rarely have we co-operated.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, having said that, here you have legislation where someone might be getting assistance from a ministry, you know, a department or ministry for certain things, and they're going to be looking at whether they can take away those benefits from individuals.

And there's different reasons and I'm not going to say . . . This is going to be up to the Justice critic to ask some questions in committee. So truly, I don't have enough understanding and background, and I'm not going to try to say that, but I just know that she will do what she needs to do to ask questions, making sure for what grounds will they say that you're not going to get benefits. And I think the critic will ask that of the minister and officials in committee, exactly who will decide and what will be the reasoning to look at why you would take away benefits from somebody.

And I'm going to leave it at that right there, Mr. Speaker, because I'll let the critic ask the tough questions, go through the process of doing it. So at this time, I could talk a little more about who got consulted on this, but I already probably have a good idea. This government doesn't seem to do that very well.

But so what I'll do at this point is just adjourn on Bill 118, adjourn debate on that bill.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 122

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 122 — *The Saskatchewan Revenue Agency Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to enter

into adjourned debate on Bill 122, *The Saskatchewan Revenue Agency Act* today and put some comments on the record. Mr. Speaker, it's an immense privilege to represent the people of Saskatoon Meewasin, but it's also a great privilege and responsibility to bring the voices of small-business owners in Saskatoon and across Saskatchewan to this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, since the last sitting of our legislature I've had the immense privilege to sit down with the chambers of commerce in Saskatoon, Humboldt, I've sat down with the North Sask Business Association, and the topic of Bill 122 came up at all three of those conversations. I will continue to press chambers of commerce to speak up about Bill 122, as I do not believe that this bill is in the best interests of small-business owners in Saskatchewan. In fact I think it's going to have huge implications for small-business owners.

Broadly speaking, this bill sets into motion the creation of a new Crown corporation called the Saskatchewan revenue agency to, quote, implement and enforce program legislation, including pricing for the assessment and collection of taxes. Mr. Speaker, the government, through a press release, remarks that the Saskatchewan revenue agency will be aimed at handling corporate taxes in the province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that this is a government that's frankly lost the plot. It's no wonder that their conservative friends and donors are abandoning them for bluer pastures. The creation of a new Crown corporation to collect corporate taxes in Saskatchewan is completely out to lunch. It is another million-dollar boondoggle waiting to happen.

Mr. Speaker, it's hard to gain an understanding of why this government would venture into this territory. The legislation presented is so vague that it's hard to know where this will even land. The minister has given no indication of why they are doing this, who was asking for this, or what will be accomplished in the creation of this new Crown corporation. What's even more surprising, Mr. Speaker, that as this government continues to attack our Crown corporations with death-by-a-thousand-cuts privatization campaigns, they look to build a new, redundant Crown that will cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan more money, that will cost Saskatchewan small-business owners more money and more headache.

Mr. Speaker, the details of the revenue agency continue to be as hazy as this government's legislative agenda. They have provided no numbers on how much this will cost to set up, how much it will cost to run, or whether it even makes financial sense.

Now this high-flying Finance minister claims that once functioning, the revenue agency will be revenue neutral. But where I promise you it certainly won't be revenue neutral is for small businesses who are forced to file their taxes twice: once with the federal government, and soon again they will have to file with the provincial government. This tax-and-spend government continues to build bigger government, spend more, and has failed to consult the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in what world does it make sense to saddle Saskatchewan small-business owners with more costs to do business in the province? Mr. Speaker, as a small-business owner, I can attest that this will absolutely make the cost of

business go up. This will be absolutely just one more bill saddled on small-business owners, because if after the last number of pandemic years wasn't enough, let's throw more costs and more red tape at small-business owners. Raise the cost of compliance. Raise the cost of doing business in Saskatchewan.

And let me tell you that this is not a government who is on the side of small businesses. This is a government that continues to raise taxes — 32 taxes in the last budget alone — and by April 1st will have hiked power rates three times. April Fool's, small-business owners. Higher power bills, higher cost of doing business — April Fool's is right. Sadly, this business environment will be a reality.

Mr. Speaker, just prior to standing up to speak to this bill, I was looking at an article on Global News that talked about niche small businesses struggling with inflation. Inflation is hitting our small businesses hard right now, Mr. Speaker, and it's hitting niche small businesses and immigrant-run businesses even harder. I retweeted the article, so if the Finance minister follows me on Twitter, she can find it there. I don't have her number or else I would text it to her so that she could consider in her upcoming budget to perhaps cut some of that red tape, decide not to raise the power bills, so that Saskatchewan small-business owners who pour their hearts into their businesses can continue to function in this province.

Because let me tell you, under these conditions, we are going to continue to see small businesses close in Saskatchewan. People are going to continue to look to other provinces to start their businesses because the reality is it is no longer a province that is friends with small businesses, and it's not on their side.

Mr. Speaker, this will raise the cost of compliance, increase red tape for small businesses, and is a complete waste of taxpayers' money. For these reasons, I will not be supporting Bill 122. And I will be encouraging small businesses around Saskatchewan to voice their opinions with this government.

I know my colleagues will have more to say, and I appreciate them standing up for small businesses in this province who are not being represented by this tired and out-of-touch government. I trust our critic will bring lots more to the record and will be asking important questions in committee. Mr. Speaker, with that, I move to adjourn debate on Bill 122.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 124

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carr that **Bill No. 124 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2022/Loi modificative de 2022 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 124, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act*.

Of course folks will know this as a bill that opens up the possibility for municipalities and regional parks to permit drinking in these locations. Indeed it was the NDP opposition that kicked the tires on something like this during COVID, when COVID was in full swing, raging, and indeed gathering outside was the only option for many families and individuals wanting to get together.

We have heard mixed response from stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. And I'm just going to speak to my views on this bill. I do have a bit of a soft spot for the spirit behind this relaxation of the public ban on alcohol. It has been found to disproportionately impact low-income people, racialized folks, which was pointed out actually, Mr. Speaker, in a recent *Toronto Star* article back in 2022. I have lived in jurisdictions where, you know, they permit the use of alcohol in parks and public spaces, in designated areas, and it didn't become an issue, Mr. Speaker. And I think whenever we have discussions about relaxing rules around substances, we have to resist the urge for floodgates, concerns, or moral panic, and we really have to follow the evidence.

And I know, as a defence lawyer, I did represent folks that were targeted with this kind of ban because not everyone has a backyard within which to enjoy a few drinks, Mr. Speaker, and this was often a pretense to kind of patrol and scrutinize houseless or low-income people in public spaces.

I do though think that this bill should be an opportunity for us to discuss and re-examine how we think and talk about substance-use disorders. I think that it's important to follow the evidence whenever speaking about these things. We here in Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan do have a unique relationship with alcohol, Mr. Speaker, and we shouldn't gloss over that fact that it is an issue in many communities. And I think that always coupled with something like this, we should be doubling down on resourcing treatment and supports out there for individuals who suffer from alcohol-use disorder.

[15:00]

I also think that whenever we have a discussion like this, it's an opportunity to look at how we regulate alcohol. You know, I'll note that something that was of deep concern to me — it may seem like a little thing, but it had significant consequences for folks, Mr. Speaker — is when I was working as a defence lawyer with Legal Aid. We're one of the last jurisdictions to put a ban on alcohol consumption on release conditions. So if someone is thought to have committed a crime while under the influence, we're one of the last jurisdictions that still require an alcohol ban.

And a lot of these folks were alcoholics. They had an addiction, and a ban was of no assistance to them. It didn't work. It just created the possibility of further administrative charges, of further criminalization. It didn't actually offer them any help with their issue. And of course this is an outdated practice that has been abandoned in many jurisdictions.

But bans on alcohol don't just end the issue or sweep them under the rug. Treatment and addressing the issues and resourcing

evidence-based approaches to these problems will bring down those rates, Mr. Speaker.

We are pleased to see that this is something that jurisdictions have the option of doing, Mr. Speaker, because this won't be an option that is good for every community. And it's important that that remain a fixture of this policy.

We're interested to looking into the details of this bill in more detail, which public spaces are deemed appropriate for this, is there flexibility around types of alcohol, and the specific locations that are candidates for this relaxation on the ban.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll just note that, you know, my comments are my comments based on my experience and my professional experience. And I know that a lot of folks come at this from different perspectives and we have had mixed responses. And I want to thank the thoughtful remarks that have been put on the record by my colleagues. So with that, I'll move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 124, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2022*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 126

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 126 — *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good to enter into adjourned debate with respect to Bill No. 126, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2022*.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will allow for First Nations to have the right to enforce laws and bylaws on-reserve. Mr. Speaker, I do understand that enforcement and prosecution are long-standing issues on reserves, and so it is very important that these amendments will adequately address those issues. We know that both Muskoday and Whitecap First Nations have begun their own pilot projects and we will watch with interest to see the results stemming from these pilots which I'm sure will be very instructive.

On the face of it, Mr. Speaker, this bill appears to move towards a transfer of jurisdiction away from our colonial, settler government to First Nations, who we absolutely need to be respecting as sovereign Nations. So it's good to see that recognition brought forward in this bill.

So you know, for now I think we do have additional questions that I believe will stem from further consultations with stakeholders and certainly particularly with First Nations leadership across this province. And so I will suspend my

judgment around this bill until our Justice critic as well as our critic for First Nations and Métis relations have had a chance to fulsomely canvass for consultations here to make sure that what the objective is with this bill will be achieved by these proposed amendments.

You know, we do this work not only to fulfill our role and our duty as members of the opposition. We have to be extra careful, Mr. Speaker, that we are making sure that this government has consulted, especially when it comes to issues that impact First Nations and Métis people in this province. Because we've seen time and time again quite a pattern of this government and their abysmal track record of properly and respectfully consulting with Indigenous peoples and Indigenous leadership in this province as equals, as sovereign Nations.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I move at this time that we adjourn debate on Bill 126, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2022*.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader. Oh, sorry. The member has moved to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — That's agreed. I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:06.]

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