



THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

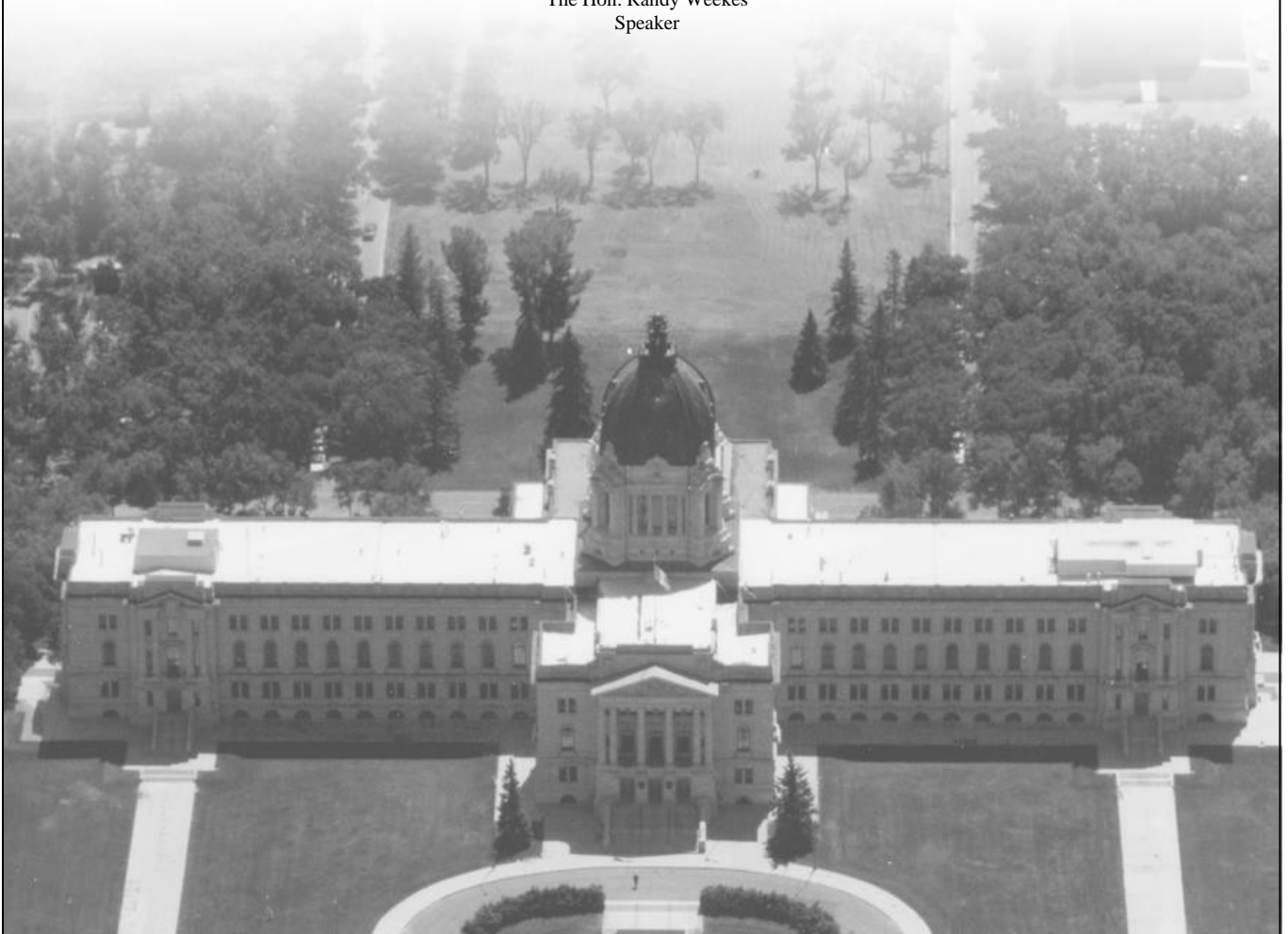
of the

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)

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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)

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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)

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 — Lumsden-Morse

Vacant — Regina Coronation Park

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 46; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12;

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

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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
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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Permission to make an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a real honour to be on my feet today. We're joined by some folks in the east gallery, a few folks here as well as on the floor today. We have from Inclusion Sask, Michele Fitzpatrick and Shandrea Verboom, as well as some other support folks, Mr. Speaker. And we have a number of self-advocates with us today, and I want to take some time to introduce each of them.

We have with us today Dylan Morin, who's no stranger to this place. And he's been introduced by myself as well as others a few times, a tremendous advocate especially for affordable, accessible transportation for all, Mr. Speaker, and heavily involved in Inclusion Sask. I want to welcome him to the Legislative Assembly.

We have Joe Reynolds from Opaskwayak First Nation in Manitoba, but who has spent two decades here in Regina as an advocate around issues that impact folks with disability, particularly Indigenous communities and low-income issues, Mr. Speaker. I want to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

We have with us today Sydney Chadwick, who has been very active in Listen to Dis'. Her passions are her dog and theatre, Mr. Speaker. I want to welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

We have Terri Sleeva, who is an incredible advocate in Saskatchewan, not just around transportation issues, Mr. Speaker, but everyone will know of her recent legal win around demanding accessible transportation here in Saskatchewan. But she has been an absolutely incredible voice for decades in this province, and I believe many have stood in this Assembly and singled her out for her advocacy. I really want to welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

We also have with us today, Kelsey Culbert. Kelsey is involved with spinal cord Saskatchewan, Listen to Dis', Astonished! Saskatchewan, Inclusion Saskatchewan. She volunteers with the Rick Hansen Foundation, and she's on the city of Regina accessibility advisory committee. So I want to welcome her to her Legislative Assembly. Welcome, Kelsey. I was looking around for you and now I have you in my sights. Welcome.

Thank you for being here.

We also have Jamie Ellis with us on the floor, Mr. Speaker. Hi, Jamie. We were speaking earlier. There were a few that arrived really early and we had a really nice, long chat, Mr. Speaker, so I learned a lot about Jamie today. But he co-founded the Voice of the Handicapped in 1973 and that's now Voice of People with Disabilities. He co-founded that with his mother, Jessie Ellis, and I understand he comes from a long pedigree of advocacy. There is indeed a park in Harbour Landing named after his family — his father's mother and himself. And if you read the sign in that park, you'll read all about Jamie's involvement in People First.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to welcome Darren Wall to this, his Legislative Assembly. I met Darren for the first time today and he wanted me to put on the record that he's from Saskatoon. He's an advocate with People First. He's been to the Legislative Assembly several times since he was eight years old, Mr. Speaker. And I didn't know this about Darren, but he did want me to mention that he is the nephew of Premier Brad Wall. So welcome to Darren to his Legislative Assembly.

We also have Dave de Laforest. Dave got active with Inclusion Sask three to six months ago. He was born and raised in Regina. You can tell from looking at him that he's a Riders fan, Mr. Speaker. And he wanted me to say, he wanted me to say today, Mr. Speaker, that he's a huge fan of the Minister of Social Services, and he's been watching him for years. So I want to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

Last but not least — and I hope I haven't missed anyone — Shelley Anderson. Shelley wanted me to give a shout-out today to Farm Credit Canada, her employer, a good employer. Shelley is also active with ICAN [Individual and Collective Advocacy Network] and People First. So I want to thank her for being here and welcome her to this, her Legislative Assembly.

I also want to give a brief shout-out to all of the other advocates and support people who are here today, Mr. Speaker, because we know that they do tremendous work for their friends and their loved ones. So I just want to mention Ron Sleeva, Trixie Alguira, and some other advocates that are here today: Ross Larden, Florence Stratton, Peter Gilmer was with us earlier. And I don't think I've missed anyone. I hope not, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway, thank you for the patience that you've offered me in introducing all these folks. If I could ask all members to join me in welcoming these people to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to join with the member opposite to introduce this group of individuals here from Inclusion Saskatchewan, as well as the advocates. A couple of weeks ago we had folks from Inclusion. We had a good meeting then. I look forward to a meeting afterwards. I met with several of these folks before, but always look forward to again.

So just real quickly, Shandrea Verboom and Michele Fitzpatrick from Inclusion, and then all the self-advocates. Great to see you all: Jamie, Darren, Kelsey, Dylan, Shelley, Dave, Trixie, Terri, Sydney, and Joe. Excuse me if I've missed anyone, but on behalf

of the government, wonderful to have you here. I wish you a good time here at the legislature, and have all the members help me welcome them here today.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to welcome in the east gallery, Avery Beaudin. Avery has a master's in social work. She is a fearless advocate who works tirelessly for people across this province. We're so happy to have her back in the province of Saskatchewan. And in addition to being the constituency assistant for the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre, Avery is also my sister-in-law and dear friend. And I'd like to ask everyone to join me in welcoming her to this Assembly.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, it seems I did miss someone, arguably the most important someone. Avery has been in my constituency office now for several months. She's been an absolute stalwart and brilliant advocate for the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, and of course I want to also join in welcoming her to this, her Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Mr. Francis: — 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.

The below undersigned are residents of Regina. I do so submit.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an absolute honour to be on my feet to present this stack of hundreds and hundreds of signatures from across the province calling on the Sask Party government to increase SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] rates. That said, I take no pleasure in being on my feet, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party government has made a

promise to make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to live with a disability, and unfortunately we're seeing that slogan ring increasingly hollow, Mr. Speaker.

I'm joined here today by many advocates, as I mentioned, recipients of the SAID program, folks who live with disability and rely on this program as an income replacement. Many of them live with significant and enduring disability, Mr. Speaker. We have signatures for this petition from Foam Lake, Craven, LeRoy, Outlook, Pelly, Hudson Bay, Marcelin, Dalmeny, Melville, Lintlaw, Lafleche, Assiniboia, Meadow Lake, Swift Current, Maple Creek, Sifton, Kelvington, Rosthern, Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Stockholm, Esterhazy, Unity, Buchanan, Humboldt, Watrous, Weyburn, Edenwold, Vanscoy, Canora, Lloydminster, North Battleford, Moose Jaw, Pike Lake, Yorkton, La Ronge, Wakaw, Val Marie, Vonda, Aberdeen . . . [inaudible] . . . Warman, Rocanville, Southey, White City, and Colonsay, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to increase SAID rates to account for inflation — there has not been an increase in seven years; to respect the constitutional rights of persons with disability in Saskatchewan by halting discriminatory practices; to index SAID rates; and to provide targeted relief to those in deepest poverty.

I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

International Francophonie Day

Ms. Conway: — Merci, monsieur le Président. Je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour célébrer la Journée internationale de la Francophonie et pour rendre hommage à la communauté francosaskoise.

La langue française est un symbole de diversité culturelle et de richesse intellectuelle. La communauté francosaskoise, quant à elle, est un exemple inspirant de cette richesse culturelle, avec une longue histoire et une présence, continue depuis plus d'un siècle. La culture francosaskoise est vibrante et dynamique, et elle est une source de fierté pour tous les habitants de la province.

Nous devons nous rappeler que le bilinguisme est un atout pour notre société pleine et que la promotion de la langue française est essentielle pour maintenir notre diversité culturelle et renforcer notre économie. Nous devons également célébrer et soutenir les efforts de la communauté francosaskoise pour préserver et promouvoir leur culture unique.

En cette Journée internationale de la Francophonie, j'invite tous les législateurs et législatrices . . . à moi pour célébrer la richesse de notre diversité linguistique et culturelle. Nous devons continuer à travailler ensemble pour assurer la promotion et la préservation de la langue française et pour soutenir la communauté francosaskoise dans ses efforts. Merci, monsieur le

Président.

[13:45]

[Translation:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to celebrate the International Francophonie Day and to pay homage to the Fransaskois community.

The French language is a symbol of cultural diversity and intellectual richness. The Fransaskois community itself is an inspiring example of this cultural wealth with a long history and continual presence for more than a century. The Fransaskois culture is vibrant and dynamic, and it's a source of pride for all inhabitants of the province.

We must remember that bilingualism is an asset for our whole society and that the promotion of the French language is essential to maintain our cultural diversity and to strengthen our economy. We must also celebrate and support the efforts of the Fransaskois community to preserve and promote their unique culture.

On this International Francophonie Day, I invite all legislators . . . with me to celebrate the richness of our linguistic and cultural diversity. We must continue to work together to ensure the promotion and the preservation of the French language and to support the Fransaskois community in its efforts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Opposition Member's Statements during Seventy-Five Minute Debate

Mr. Lemaigre: — Mr. Speaker, during a private members' day debate on Thursday, the member from Regina Rosemont made a number of extremely offensive and racially charged statements about me. He was speaking about our government's policy on First Nations issues like duty-to-consult. And then he said, I quote:

. . . my advice to the member from Athabasca . . . is, sometimes you've got to say no. Sometimes you have to exercise your own judgment and take a stand for the people you represent.

Mr. Speaker, in this House we can and should have differences of opinion and policy debates. But to listen to a non-Indigenous member tell me that I am not representing my own judgment, that I'm not representing my people, it is insulting. It is offensive. It is patronizing. And it is racist.

It is this kind of "we know what's best for you" mentality that led to so many failed First Nation policies like residential schools. I know that mentality still exists today, but I had hoped that at least the members of this House were beyond that kind of attitude. Apparently not.

So, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to many more vigorous debates and . . . that members oppose about our differences in opinion. But to the member of Rosemont: don't you dare ever again tell me that I'm not representing my judgment and my people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Safe Access Zones for People Seeking Abortions

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, in the first session of this legislature I introduced a private member's bill calling on the Sask Party government to guarantee safe access zones for people seeking abortions in our province. Then I reintroduced it in the second session, Mr. Speaker, and yet again in the third session. Only crickets from this Sask Party government; that's all we've heard.

It is unacceptable that individuals seeking abortion care are subjected to harassment and intimidation by anti-choice protesters in our province. Abortion is an essential health care service and it's a human right, Mr. Speaker.

A Change.org submission petition in support of my private member's bill has reached nearly 30,000 signatures to date, which clearly demonstrates widespread support for this crucial legislation.

So when will we see the Sask Party government recognize the importance of protecting the safety and privacy of individuals seeking reproductive health care by finally taking action and passing this private member's bill? It is well past time for the Health minister and his backwards government to quit avoiding their duty to ensure Saskatchewan people have the legislated right to safely access abortion without fear of harm or intimidation.

It's time for this government to quit doing the old duck-and-dodge every time access to abortion is brought forward by the opposition. This Premier and the members of his government need to finally set aside their personal anti-choice views and get to work advancing reproductive rights in our province.

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

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. March 21st is designated by the United Nations as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This is a day that is observed around the world to draw attention to the problems associated with racism and the need to end any form of hate and intolerance.

This past week I was happy to attend the Spring Free from Racism Family Day which took place right here in Regina. Now this year's event was hosted in memory of Purple Lady, Barb Dedi. Barb Dedi was a long-time Regina volunteer, known for her passionate activism, and it's so sad that Barb has passed away.

As we all know, ending discrimination is not the work of one person or an organization, but rather something we need to take a stand against in our lives, in every day. I would like to thank the Spring Free from Racism for the work they do, the commitment to ensuring that everyone — and I mean everyone

— is treated equally and fairly.

In Saskatchewan we celebrate diversity and inclusion. This can be reflected in our provincial motto: “from many peoples, strength.” Mr. Speaker, there is no place for racism, hate speech, bullying, intolerance in our province of Saskatchewan because, Mr. Speaker, we are stronger together. Thank you very much.

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

Social Work Week

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today marks the beginning of Social Work Week in Saskatchewan. Every day social workers help individuals and families experiencing difficulty in their lives. They provide critical supports and services to help clients overcome complex challenges, including substance misuse, intimate partner violence, mental health crisis, and intergenerational trauma. Whether you work in a public or private service or one of our community-based organizations, your work is greatly appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, in a period of time when mental health issues are being brought to the forefront of conversations on wellness, it's important that we support the people that take care of us. That's why this government is proud of the investments we've made in social workers, investments of \$2 million in prevention programs so more children can remain safely at home with their families.

That's on top of nearly five and a half million dollars to increase availability of out-of-home care resources and add new program delivery supports. And last year we also provided over 400 million in funding to community-based organizations.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to providing our social workers and CBO [community-based organization] partners with consistent and stable funding, thanks to our economy. Because that's growth, Mr. Speaker, that works for everyone.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Benefits of Graduate Retention Program

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan's grad retention program is yet another indication of the value our province puts on our youth and our commitment to investing in their future here at home, their home. Since 2008 our government has provided \$739 million in grad retention program benefits to over 81,000 post-secondary graduates. That is 81,000 Saskatchewan youth receiving a clear invitation from their communities and their province to plant their roots and build their lives at home where they are loved and appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, we understand how important the post-secondary sector is to our province and the economy. We also understand that we need to retain those qualified skilled workers once they graduate. That's why we created the grad retention program, the only one of its kind in Canada. It provides up to \$20,000 in income tax credits to eligible post-secondary graduates who live and work in Saskatchewan after completing their program. Mr. Speaker, it benefits graduates of Saskatchewan's post-secondary

institutions, graduates from other province and territories, and international students who choose to build their careers in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as the parents of six kids in this province — two who've graduated, two who are in college, and two who are still living at home — my wife and I want to say that anything that'll keep our kids here so they'll be raising our grandchildren in Saskatchewan, that is growth that works for everyone.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Growth in Wholesale Trade Numbers

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The value of Saskatchewan's exports continues to increase. In January of 2023, the value of wholesale trade in Saskatchewan increased by a rate over 20 per cent from December of 2022, the third-highest rate among the provinces. And year over year, wholesale trade grew by nearly 50 per cent, making Saskatchewan's wholesale trade growth rate the second highest in the nation. That's over 1.5 billion in growth from January of last year to January of this year.

Mr. Speaker, that's on top of our record from last week: urban housing starts, up over 75 per cent from February of 2022 to February of 2023; investment and building construction, up nearly 22 per cent year over year; and 9,400 new jobs here at home in the same period; more agri-food products, more minerals, and more resources being produced right here in Saskatchewan and sent to every continent.

We're committed to growing this economy and our international trade network so that our trade partners know that this is the place to do business. A strong and diverse economy means more jobs and more opportunities, regardless of your background because that's growth that works for everyone.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Affordability and Cost of Living

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this is a premier that's failing to deliver when it comes to the cost of living. His tired and out-of-touch government have raised fees and taxes, they've hiked power and energy bills, all while presiding over the worst economy in the country. Why is this Premier actually choosing to make life more expensive while Saskatchewan families are already struggling to pay the bills?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as has been said many times in this Assembly, each and every budget year this government invests about \$2 billion in affordability measures for Saskatchewan families, many targeted at Saskatchewan families that are of a low income, Mr. Speaker.

And so most certainly as we look to the budget — just two more sleeps until we'll get to the provincial budget for this year, Mr. Speaker — not only are you going to see continued investment

in affordability measures for Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan families, but you're going to see additional investments as well, Mr. Speaker, in just a short couple of days, investments that I would invite all that have joined us here today to make note of on budget day.

When it comes to the SAID program in Saskatchewan that was introduced by this government, you most certainly are going to see continued investment in that program, Mr. Speaker. You're going to see increases to the investment that we have in that program to ensure that in this province, those that are living with a disability have the very best life they can in the nation of Canada.

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

Ms. Beck: — That Premier's record is one of raising taxes and making life more expensive, Mr. Speaker, and those simply are the facts. New numbers out this morning show that more than half the people in this province are worse off this year than they were last year, and we lead the nation when it comes to mortgage arrears. Costs keep rising. This government keeps making things worse, and Saskatchewan people keep falling behind.

My question: when will Saskatchewan families see some real relief when it comes to the cost of living, from this tired and out-of-touch government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to . . . as I have said many times in this House, in the rotunda, is that in this province we are not immune to the inflationary pressures that we're seeing across Canada. In saying that, we do have strength in our resource-based economy that's creating jobs, over 20,000 jobs over the course of the past year. Those are jobs for folks that are moving here from other areas of the nation, other areas of the world, Mr. Speaker, and for our children.

Mr. Speaker, TD Bank [Toronto Dominion Bank], for example, has made comments with respect to the economy in Saskatchewan, the affordability in Saskatchewan, and I quote, "As a result, affordability remains decent by historical standards unlike most other jurisdictions in the country." This, Mr. Speaker, is a comment by TD Bank.

Mr. Speaker, there is more work to do in this space. We need to continue to build on more recent affordability measures like the \$500 tax affordability credit cheques that were provided; the billion dollars in debt that was paid down last fiscal year, that most certainly is going to offset interest charges into the future, Mr. Speaker.

But Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan most certainly is not immune to the inflationary pressures that are being caused for a number of reasons across this nation, across the continent of North America, and in many cases around the world.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the cost-of-living crisis impacts everyone, but it impacts seniors and those on fixed income the most. And the Premier doesn't have to ask TD Bank. In fact he

can ask the people who are here today what the impacts have been.

Seniors continue to see their pensions clawed back from provincial supports, and those on SAID have not seen an increase in years. When will we see targeted measures to help seniors and those on fixed income keep a roof over their heads and food on their table?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I would invite once again everyone in this Assembly to tune in to the budget that's going to be released in two days, where you are going to see investments just like these.

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

Establishment of a Provincial Revenue Agency

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this is a tired and out-of-touch government that's failing to deliver on front after front: health care, education, jobs, cost of living. They're failing to deliver in part because they're too focused on keeping the separatists in their tent, Mr. Speaker, and not focused on what matters to people.

Take for example their plans for a new tax collection agency, adding millions in costs for the public and higher costs for local businesses. Why won't the Sask Party scrap this costly plan for their own tax collection agency?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — You know, it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP opposition only have ideas how you can spend more and spend more and spend more. But they have no creative ideas — they certainly do not have creative ideas — they have no creative ideas on how they would make money or generate any revenue to pay for those spendings. They also are not creative in what they can do to help industry within our province, Mr. Speaker.

I have spoken to a number of groups and a number of businesses, and explained that there are times we will want to make tax changes and the CRA [Canada Revenue Agency] will not allow us even though it would be advantageous for our businesses here at home. Mr. Speaker, this is not going to happen soon. And I would love to answer the member's question, the next question right away. But there is no opportunity to do that if CRA denies it, Mr. Speaker. We are exploring this. It'll be a few years to make it a reality.

[14:00]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well wow, Mr. Speaker. I guess people in Saskatchewan can understand how that minister and that government fails to balance budgets, and why they pile on debt year after year after year, Mr. Speaker. This is a government

that's taken its eye off the ball.

This program right here is going to cost Saskatchewan people millions, Mr. Speaker. More spending. The costs of collections and auditing for the provincial government will be over \$10 million per year, and the cost to local businesses being forced to file their taxes twice in a more complex system, another \$16 million a year more for local businesses. Over the next decade, that's more than \$250 million in new costs, more costs for the government, for taxpayers, and for local businesses. How does this make any sense to that Minister of Finance?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I won't even unwrap where the NDP opposition get their numbers from because it's simply ridiculous, and the numbers are not accurate, quite frankly.

However, you know, they say that they stand up for women. They are members that say they stand up for women. Well where were they when the federal government made changes to the passive income, where female professionals could not accumulate the passive income that they needed that should they take a maternity leave, they could keep their business going, such as a female veterinarian or a female doctor?

When the province proposed changes that we could make so that our women professionals were protected from those changes, the CRA said no, Mr. Speaker. Is that okay with those members opposite? Is that something they support, is that the female professionals got penalized by federal government changes, and we were just supposed to stand by and not come up with any options for those professional women?

Why won't those members opposite stand up for the professionals and the businesses within this province?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the minister should know that that government can work with the federal government, pressure the federal government, and change that agreement. You know, I've spoken with countless business leaders and local businesses since this half-baked idea was put forward in the Throne Speech. The only businesses who might stand to benefit are some accountants, and not because this is good for Saskatchewan but because it will drive up the bills for local businesses, who will have to file their taxes twice in a more complex tax system. Despite that, let me be clear, every accountant that I've heard from thinks this government's revenue agency is foolish. It makes no sense.

Why won't this tired and out-of-touch government scrap this costly vanity project today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, you know, we're looking at a model that has been followed in Alberta now for 40-plus years. It's been a number of years where they've had this structure, Mr. Speaker. And we know the structure works in

Alberta, Mr. Speaker.

When we have accounting firms that we've spoken to and consulted with, that have clients both in Saskatchewan and Alberta, there will be a slight increase because they will have to do an additional schedule or two here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. So that when talking to accountants, it could be a hundred-dollar increase to their tax bill. We recognize that. And that's why I'm consulting with businesses and outlining the advantages versus the disadvantages, Mr. Speaker.

But what the members opposite will do, quite frankly, they would do nothing. They have no creative ideas, and they would support the federal government every single step of the way, even if it is no advantage to the businesses here in our province.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this foolish plan to build the Saskatchewan revenue agency would cost the people of Saskatchewan \$10 million more annually, \$16 million more in compliance costs for local businesses, businesses that are already facing high interest, supply chain issues, new taxes, and costs. Over a decade, it will cost taxpayers and local businesses nearly \$260 million more, not to mention all the time and energy of government, which could be focused in so many better ways.

All this to have a less effective, more costly, cumbersome tax system where businesses will need to pay more and file twice. Costly, heavy-duty red tape, Mr. Speaker. Why won't the Sask Party scrap this plan today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I'll be very interested when the member opposite has to actually substantiate the numbers that he's quoting there because I'm not sure where he gets those numbers. He also is not taking into account that when a province does that, then they retain the interest and penalty payments that CRA right now is keeping. Also any tax incentive that we have, we have to pay CRA to administer it — if they will agree to administer it, Mr. Speaker — and that is specific tax incentives that we have in our province to support business.

I find it rather interesting that the members opposite, who just want to tax the rich — most of whom are business owners — that's how they want to pay for all the increases. And now they want to be the champion of business? Business people know better, Mr. Speaker.

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

Social Services and Affordability

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has not done nearly enough to help Saskatchewan people with the skyrocketing cost of living. They fail to deliver real support to regular people. You can imagine people on fixed incomes are struggling especially, and have received next to no relief from this government.

People deserve to weather this crisis with dignity, Mr. Speaker. Why has the Minister of Social Services failed to deliver anything for those on income and housing supports?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ from the members opposite. We have. In this budget we increased SIS [Saskatchewan income support] rates. We came forward with a \$500 affordability tax credit. So just those two programs for some of our most vulnerable folks in the province is a 10 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker.

With that being said, I've been listening to many from the different sectors, Mr. Speaker, including Inclusion Saskatchewan. And as the Premier alluded to, we understand there are challenges, and in just a couple of days, we'll be able to make some important announcements on increases to many of the programs within the Ministry of Social Services. And, Mr. Speaker, that's growth that works for everybody. Thanks.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, as you know, a group of folks who rely on SAID, and their advocates, have joined us today here in their Legislative Assembly. Their assured income is assuring less and less of life's necessities.

The government will point fingers and distract when asked about the cost of living. They'll repeat the slogan coined by Premier Brad Wall of making Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to live with a disability, but they aren't taking meaningful steps to support those the SAID program was designed to dignify. No increase in seven years, Mr. Speaker. Through a pandemic. Now through a historic cost-of-living crisis. When will the minister act to increase SAID in a meaningful way?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer, we'll act in just a couple of days. But in terms of the SAID program, I'd like to remind the member opposite that it was this government that brought that program in, distinguishing between those with disabilities and those on other income assistance programs, Mr. Speaker. We've seen the need, Mr. Speaker, granted an increase.

But I would like to point out to the member as well, there's many — in the SAID program — many payments that are made, actuals that are direct payments, Mr. Speaker. And those include utilities, electricity, home heating, laundry, sewer, clothing benefits, special food items, home care services, laundry costs, respite care, mobility aids, devices, equipment benefit. There's moving expenses. There's several others, Mr. Speaker, which help insulate those on the SAID program from the increases that the member talked about.

I'd also point out, Mr. Speaker, again the affordability tax credit that we were able to bring forward because of our strong and growing economy. I mentioned we're going to make some changes in the coming days. And I'll answer more in the next question.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government did start the SAID program, and you've heard me in this place give them credit for that. But they have not honoured the spirit of that program. And while I'm heartened to hear that something is coming in this budget, will it catch up, Mr. Speaker?

This program has been so starved. Folks are here because they don't have any other option but to be here, Mr. Speaker. They're here because the supports they receive today represent a 20 per cent reduction in what they received in 2012. They shouldn't have to come to their Assembly and beg for an assured income that covers their most basic expenses. And they shouldn't have had to wait this long for an increase.

When can people expect more from this government, that their dignity is honoured and their voices are heard? When can they expect support that actually keeps up with the rising cost of living?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, in terms of the SAID program, the rates are much higher than they are on the other income assistance programs we have. Some of the highest in the nation, Mr. Speaker, of those rates. So we've continued to listen. We've increased the exemptions over time. We've changed the rates four times since we brought in the program, increased the exemptions and made them not just monthly but a yearly perspective, so folks can earn more and learn on the job, Mr. Speaker.

So again we are going to make changes in the coming days, Mr. Speaker. I ask the member to pay close attention when the Minister of Finance rises on Wednesday to deliver the budget, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to know however, with that announcement, are the NDP going to support it when we have a vote for the budget, Mr. Speaker?

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

Recommendations of Chief Medical Health Officer

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government has stopped listening when it comes to health care. New documents released this week show that the Health minister ignored Dr. Shahab's warning that more action was needed to protect our health care system. This government didn't listen. Our hospital capacity collapsed and the Canadian Armed Forces needed to step in to save lives.

This government refuses to listen to health care workers, local voices, Dr. Shahab, and anyone outside their inner circle. In the case of the pandemic it cost people their loved ones. What do you have to say to the families of those who died because you ignored the CMHO [chief medical health officer]?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and as I've said many times in this House, we made the best decisions we could with the information we had at that time. The article said that we had loosened restrictions in July. Dr. Shahab had advised us in September, and in October we put in more restrictions, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, those were challenging times. I thank all of the health care workers. We did listen to the health care workers. We met with them. The Minister of Rural and Remote Health and I went out last year to meet with all of these health care workers. Mr. Speaker, we meet with them on a continual basis to be able to get them to provide input to help shape our decisions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the article showed that Dr. Shahab told provincial leaders the health care system would be overwhelmed more than a month before patients were transferred to Ontario. And it's curious that the minister didn't even respond to media requests about this over the weekend, Mr. Speaker.

This opposition asked the Premier and Minister of Health to release Dr. Shahab's recommendations over and over again in the fall of 2021. They adamantly refused to release his recommendations, arguing — as they've done today — that they'd been acted on, despite the fact that there was visible daylight between Dr. Shahab's recommendations and what the government was saying.

Promises were made that we could trust this government, and promises were not kept, Mr. Speaker. How can the minister stand here and assure the people of Saskatchewan that he's listening to health care workers today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and as I said, we were following Dr. Shahab's advice throughout this. Dr. Shahab made recommendations and we acted on that with our proof of vaccination and our proof of negative tests, Mr. Speaker, with people that are within the employment of the government. We did have a mask mandate that came out, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, we continue to make sure that the health cares . . . have the supports from this government to be able to do the jobs. And I can't thank the health care workers enough, over the last two years, what they're doing now, and what they're going to do for this province into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

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

Support for the Health Care System

Ms. Mowat: — That's not what the FOI [freedom of information] showed, and this is their own correspondence, Mr. Speaker. That's a shameful answer. They ignored Dr. Shahab and now they're ignoring health care workers on the front lines today.

As SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] president, Tracy Zambory, said last week, Saskatchewan health care is a disaster. Our ERs [emergency room] and hospitals are collapsing because of this government's record of failure. Nurses are calling for the government to create a task force to fix the crisis that the Sask Party government has created in our ERs across this province.

Will the Minister of Health finally listen to health care workers, or will he ignore nurses like he ignored Dr. Shahab?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And when we went out on our travel to be able to visit all of these and go in and sit down in their coffee rooms with these health care workers and be able to talk to them about what are their concerns, the overwhelming response we heard, Mr. Speaker, is we need more people, we need more health care workers.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, we've implemented our four-point plan. We have more nurses working in the health care system right now. We have over 90 nurses that graduated in December that are now employed. We have almost 170 doctors that we brought in the last 17 months, Mr. Speaker. We've announced 550 seats; the Minister of Advanced Education has done that.

We have incentives. We're bringing nurses in from the Philippines. We have recruitment incentives. We have retention incentives. We just announced last week a \$200,000 incentive program for rural doctors, Mr. Speaker. We went out, we listened to the people, and we acted on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is refusing to listen at every turn. To the minister: listen to the nurses when they say that another collapse is imminent. Listen to the auditor when she says that your four-point plan falls short. Listen to the folks in Delisle and other small communities who are begging the minister for help. Why won't the minister listen to anyone who doesn't share his view that everything in health care is just fine?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And like I said last week, just two, three weeks ago I met with Ms. Zambory of SUN. I'm meeting with her again this week to be able to . . . Mr. Speaker, I meet with these groups all the time. I'm meeting with the family physicians this Friday. I'm meeting with the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] later this month, Mr. Speaker. I sit down and I talk to health care workers. On my drive down from Saskatoon, I spent 45 minutes talking to two health care workers, one from Yorkton and one from St. Paul's Hospital, to discuss some of their concerns.

I'm accessible, Mr. Speaker, to be able to, for them to point out some of the suggestions that they have and see if we can act on that. We had a very positive conversation about some of the ideas that they have, some that we can implement, some that we have to work on with other stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. But to say that we're not listening to health care workers, Mr. Speaker, is

absolutely dead wrong.

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

Harm Reduction Initiatives

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the coroners service reports that between January 1st and February 28th of this year, 103 people died from overdose. That was three weeks ago, and more have died since. And yet the provincial government offers no funding for safe consumption sites, which save lives. It's not too late to change. It's not too late to choose to keep people alive. Will the government commit to funding safe consumption sites as part of their harm reduction plan?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've stated previously in this Chamber, the government funds a number of different initiatives through harm reduction but also through treatment and recovery. And just last Thursday, we announced the first section of the first tranche of additional treatment and recovery beds in this province, 14 more post-treatment beds at the treatment facility in Estevan. We now have 475 currently pre-, post-treatment beds as well as other treatment in this province, Mr. Speaker.

We are going to continue to build upon that treatment capacity in this province as part of our commitment to add at least 150 more treatment spaces in Saskatchewan in the months and years ahead, Mr. Speaker. We'll hear more on Wednesday about this government's commitment towards this important file. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order.

The Speaker: — State your point of order please.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During question period the member for Saskatoon Meewasin made a comment that was disgraceful, and I'm going to reserve the right to elevate this point of order to a question of contempt going forward, Mr. Speaker.

The entire Chamber heard what he said. He referred to the Minister of Finance as a monkey. And they're laughing. They are laughing. I would point to particularly the member for Regina Elphinstone who is laughing.

Mr. Speaker, referring to our Minister of Finance as a monkey is clearly out of order and clearly disgraceful from this member. He needs to stand on his feet. He needs to withdraw. He needs to apologize. And we are going to consider whether to bring this forward, Mr. Speaker, as a question of contempt.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Sarauer: — I just spoke with the member for Meewasin to figure out what it was that he had heckled across the floor, in case the Government House Leader wasn't able to hear it. He said, it's always monkey see, monkey do with this government in respect to their constant need to copy Alberta, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what else to say.

The Speaker: — Yeah, we could check the record, but let's cut to the chase. You know, you're getting close to the line. I would ask you to stand and withdraw and apologize.

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw and apologize.

The Speaker: — Thank you. I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

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

The Speaker: — Please state your point of order.

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, during members' statements the member for Athabasca made a personal accusation, a personal charge against the member for Rosemont, a clear violation of 51(f) of the rules. Also categorically untrue.

Mr. Speaker, if this is the path that government members want to go down, this place could get real ugly real fast if these sorts of personal accusations are allowed to stand. I'd ask that you find that the member apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I would invite you, Mr. Speaker, to review the member's statement from the member for Athabasca. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage everybody to review the member's statement from the member for Athabasca. And they can make a judgment. They can make a judgment as to who should be apologizing in this House right now, Mr. Speaker, because I think the vast majority of the public will have a very clear idea who should be standing right now and apologizing.

The Speaker: — I will review it and make a ruling tomorrow.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

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 Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise

today and enter into debate on Bill No. 116, *The Plant Health Act*.

Mr. Speaker, the minister's remarks with respect to this bill were fairly brief so I am going to keep my remarks brief as well, as I understand this Act has not been reviewed in full since 1978 and therefore was in stark need of a revamp.

From the minister's own remarks, it appears that some consultations were made throughout last summer and that there weren't any criticisms at that time. I know that the critic will be looking at this piece of legislation in full and taking a look at it with a keen eye on reaching out to stakeholders as well to see if they have any feedback with respect to the legislation.

And in order to allow that work to be done, I'm prepared now to adjourn debate on this 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. 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 Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a bill that is titled *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*, Bill No. 117. And I think much has already been said on this bill.

While we stand with the government in opposition to the federal firearms ban, we do have concerns about this bill as our provincial response. In particular, it has already been mentioned that once again this government did not consult with Indigenous and Métis people, and hunters in particular, before bringing this bill forward. It is a matter of a government that is not listening to the people of Saskatchewan. And I would go further to say that, in addition to Indigenous and Métis rights holders, another important group that was missed in the consultation are women — women who are the victims of violence, domestic violence and sexual assault.

And I think that this bill is shameful. It is a shameful political ploy to continue a very divisive relationship with our federal counterparts in order to gain cheap political points on an issue of great importance and significance. Because while we all can agree on the fact that firearm violence is a significant issue here in Saskatchewan and that we need common-sense approaches, I would submit that this bill does not achieve that goal.

And in particular I want to also make reference to some comments that were made in a recent article and interview with Rick Ruddell, who is a University of Regina justice studies professor. And he points out initially that Saskatchewan has the highest rate among Canadian provinces of victimization in

firearms-related crimes at 82.5 per 100,000 people, and the province's two largest cities ranked first and third among Canada's largest cities. So clearly we have an issue here in this province that needs to be addressed.

But what's also important to understand is that there are distinct differences in our gun violence problem. And he points out two, sort of three, categories, breaking those down into guns and gangs; domestic violence instances involving firearms; and thirdly, firearms use in more ordinary crimes such as robberies and intimidation.

So certainly this is not a one-size-fits-all kind of a solution. We have to make sure that we get this legislation right and that we're addressing all aspects of the problem and that we're engaging widely with all interests and stakeholders and citizens of this province who are impacted by this legislation.

Because while I certainly also appreciate and support the views of those who live on the land, who live off the land, and as law-abiding citizens and their rights to have a licence to hold licensed firearms, this legislation doesn't go far enough. And it is missing some very critical issues in terms of how we protect the most vulnerable in our society and how we protect women.

This is a government that has continued to fail the women in our province. We've talked about the fact that there is a lack of access to abortion services in this province. We've talked about the gendered wage gap in this province. And I would submit that this is a further affront to women in our province who need to be protected. And this legislation offers nothing to them. It is instead, as I said already, just a cheap, political ploy to continue to seed division when we need more reconciliation instead of retaliation as we've seen from this government, this tired and old government, time and time again.

[14:30]

I have to say that there's been several instances in the past year where this government has taken the opportunity to stir up division and debate, not just with this . . . [inaudible] . . . as its most recent example, but in other ways. And when I talk to citizens right across this province, and of course my own constituency of Nutana, what I am hearing time and time again is people don't even recognize this province anymore. The level of anger and fear is palpable. You see it on bumper stickers, bumper stickers that say "eff Trudeau" and children talking on playgrounds along with the same line of rhetoric.

We have articles by the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] executive director asking and begging people to please stop subscribing to the negative, and I wholeheartedly endorse that message. And this bill does the opposite to that. It continues to seed strife, division, promote fear, and does not come close to addressing the very legitimate concerns that landowners and rights holders have in this province, and those who are the victims of gun violence in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So while we do see the need for better approaches, we want to see that in a more collaborative and co-operative way instead of ways that create more layers of legislation, more red tape, more cost, more layers of institutions and commissioners, but ones that

will do so in cost-effective ways that get at the roots of gun violence and crime. So with that I will conclude my remarks and adjourn debate on Bill No. 117.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 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 Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll enter in briefly here today with respect to Bill No. 118, *The Warrant Compliance Act*, Mr. Speaker. I'll leave the bulk of the entry for our critic, who's been consulting and working with those across Saskatchewan on this very issue in this legislation, Mr. Speaker. Certainly we support and urge action to have better tools and to be more effective in apprehending violent offenders, Mr. Speaker. We know the horrible tragedies that have lived out in this province and that live out all too often, Mr. Speaker.

There's a lot of questions around ensuring that these tools are as effective as they can be and that the definitions in this legislation are up to muster, Mr. Speaker. And I know our critic will be bringing forward those types of questions, Mr. Speaker, and suggestions. It will be our aim obviously to make sure that we have stronger tools and that this government is able to be more effective in responding to violent offenders and ensuring safety in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

With that being said, I'll adjourn debate with respect to Bill No. 118.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 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 Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to enter my remarks on Bill No. 122, the Saskatchewan revenue Act. My colleagues have all entered . . . many of them have entered their remarks into this debate, and I think it's also important that I also provide some comments. You know, this is

interesting how quickly this government acts when it serves them, to introduce legislation when it serves them. And when they came into government there was a huge rainy day fund that was squandered.

I worked in the health care sector for a number of years when the failed, failed lean program came in. That lean program that was introduced, we took the human aspect out of health care. And that was a failed, expensive program. The marshal program that's being introduced here, that's costing in a time where affordability is of utmost importance to the people of this province. We have this government squandering money, creating programs, legislation — expensive legislation — without thinking about, what is this going to cost? How is this going to trickle down to the regular folks in this province when this government is introducing legislation that suits them?

So when I think about the choices in how taxpayer dollars are spent, and when you have legislation like this being introduced, who are they talking to? Who are the stakeholders that are being engaged from the onset?

And we've seen last week here on Wednesday and Thursday communities from all across this province coming to the Saskatchewan legislature to let people know how upset they were that they weren't engaged in a meaningful way. It's going to happen more.

And the choices that this government makes in spending dollars. There was an easy fix when it came to the Saskatchewan health cards that had the R on it that identified treaty status Indians on there. It took a human rights complaint to get this government to agree to moving it, but half measures is all they took. They said, we will not issue new health cards to these folks that have that identifier on their health cards. That wouldn't have costed a whole lot of money, but instead they're spending on programs like the marshal program, and I guess now the Saskatchewan revenue Act.

People in this province are already finding it difficult to make ends meet. And they're being accountable to the dollars they have, and yet this government fails to do that at every turn. And when there's something that is of interest to them, they act so quickly to introduce it and they do not consult with people that are going to be impacted. And here's this legislation here. Who has been asked? Who has been dialogued with? Certainly the people that are going to be most impacted haven't been. This is an example of a tired, old government that will spend the people's dollars, the taxpayers of this province, their dollars, without really considering what they think.

So the critic for this area I'm sure will have a lot more questions to ask. And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 122, the Saskatchewan revenue Act. miigwech.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 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 Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet entering into debate on Bill No. 124, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2022*.

It's been a rather interesting set of circumstances around the introduction of this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Initially, as you will recall, it was sort of a last-minute event last spring without any consultation and, you know, came back in the fall session. And over that time, I've been able to speak with many communities and municipal leaders in my role as Municipal Affairs critic about their support for this bill.

You're probably aware that the response from municipalities has been rather mixed. And in fact close to 59 per cent of respondents to a survey that was undertaken by SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] indicated that they were not in favour of these amendments to allow for bylaws around drinking in parks and other public areas. And part of the reason for that, I understand it, has to do with very basic administrative concerns and cost concerns related to bylaw enforcement and policing costs.

For many communities this does not represent a net gain or benefit, particularly for communities. And I heard this very clearly in my discussions with mayors and councils that are already struggling around issues of alcoholism and public drinking and don't feel that this is a direction that they want to be heading down as a municipality.

And so I take that feedback to heart. I appreciate the concerns around public intoxication and the message that seems to be sending to communities about the role of alcohol and other substances in our communities, particularly those that are really struggling with substance use disorders in general. We know, and has already been admitted by the Premier himself, that there is an intersection we're dealing with right now between substance use and crime rates. We know that it also fuels things like domestic violence and creates other social ills.

And while I do believe that there can be responsible consumption and that, you know, a good proportion of the adult public are responsible users, just in the same way that we have responsible gun owners and responsible drivers in this province, so on and so forth. But you know, at the end of the day we need a balance and we need to ensure that the right measures are in place and that we're not burdening municipalities, as has been the ongoing case with this government that already has so many issues.

I can tell you, I was in the Deputy Speaker's own community a couple of weeks ago, speaking with community leaders there, and heard very graphically about the struggles Prince Albert is facing with cardboard cities and a decimated downtown area and

so many issues that are going unaddressed. And the last thing they want is a bylaw allowing for public drinking. They're already struggling, I tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just with what's already on their plate. And this is the last thing they need at a time like this.

And so, you know, it is about context. It's about understanding the needs of Saskatchewan communities and their capacity to take on additional responsibilities, where they need to focus their efforts right now.

[14:45]

And I mean, while I love to think of, you know, how enjoyable it would be to be able to sit on a patio, say at the jazz festival or some other lovely summertime event, and enjoy a glass of wine or a pint of beer, that for others this is a more complicated issue, a more difficult issue in terms of how we as a province are supporting harm reduction, how we are supporting those who are struggling with substance use, and how we are helping to address the root causes of crime in our province as well.

I would say also that I find it very disturbing to listen day after day to the government side's response to the substance use crisis we have in our province and the lack of true harm reduction measures. We have a toxic drug supply. We need to protect lives through harm reduction measures, through safe consumption sites. And we can't be blinded by ideological arguments that place the blame on the individual and call it a moral failure. And I do want to take the opportunity, while we're speaking about alcohol as a substance, to also touch on that because we do have high rates of alcoholism here in the province, along with an array of other substances. It is crisis proportions.

We have overdoses happening, you know, at astonishingly and alarmingly high rates here in the province. And all of this is connected. And so while alcohol may be, you know, the drug of choice of one individual, it may be something else and potentially more lethal for another individual.

And we're not sending the right message when we open up and allow for the measures in this bill. And I think that it's off point and is a clear indication of how this government has lost touch with the people and the issues that they're facing right now. It's not, you know, drink up, don't worry, be happy. It's really about ensuring that we're addressing the affordability crisis, that we're addressing the critical health care shortages and failures by this government and providing good paying jobs for Saskatchewan people.

And with that I will conclude my remarks and adjourn debate on Bill No. 124.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 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 Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am again on my feet to talk about Bill 126, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act*.

So this bill gives First Nations, they have the right to enforce laws and bylaws on the reserve. And also the time limit to apply to strike out a conviction is extended from 15 to 60 days.

And so when I think about this, you know, it's actually quite interesting to have Muskoday and Whitecap, they have a pilot project. And it would be interesting to see the results they have in once they evaluate and do their reporting on this pilot project.

You know, there is a number of things that come to mind when I think about this. And I know it's been raised all over media when First Nations have been interviewed, whether it's FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] or individual First Nations, when it comes to enforcing their laws. And like in First Nation communities they have their BCRs [band council resolution], and it's sometimes a challenge because First Nations are on federal jurisdiction but they also abide by the provincial laws. And when they have BCRs it's often a challenge to enforce those laws, for law enforcement to enforce them.

And one of the things that has been quite contentious in this province has been the introduction of the trespass Act. And we have had a number of First Nation communities express how, when non-Indigenous people trespass on their land and they call the authorities, those individuals are not charged. They're politely escorted and told, oh you're not supposed to be here. Sadly that's not the case when the shoe's on the other foot.

So I'd be quite interested in knowing how the outcome of the pilot project would be for Muskoday and Whitecap. Because we know the trespass Act is something that has been contentious in this province for a number of reasons, and we've all said it numerous, numerous times about consultation. There hasn't been a dialogue and listen. There's just been a, this is what we're doing and we're going to do it whether you like it or not. Or there's, well we'll consult our friends.

So I know First Nations and Métis inherent rights holders in this province have had issue with this trespass Act. And it's not reported and doesn't catch the media attention all the time, but there are people that trespass onto First Nations and nothing is done. Law enforcement doesn't pay attention.

So I'm very curious. Actually I wouldn't mind having a chat with Muskoday myself and Whitecap just to understand more of what . . . the intent and also their pilot project. And it's wonderful to know that First Nations are doing what they need to do to serve their Nations and do what's in the best interest for their Nations. So it's good to see that this is something that is happening right now, and I look forward to hearing the results of the outcome on this pilot project.

With that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks because the critic for this area will have much more to ask. So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 126. miigwech.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committee this afternoon and this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:54.]

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