



THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
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The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
3rd Session — 29th Legislature

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

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

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Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP)	Vacant — Regina Coronation Park
Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)	Vacant — Regina Walsh Acres

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 45; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12;
Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1; Vacant — 3

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Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

Clerk: — Members, I wish to advise the Assembly that Mr. Speaker will not be present to open this day's sitting.

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would maybe ask for leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Pardon me, Mr. Speaker. Not maybe I would ask for leave. I did ask for leave.

Mr. Speaker, it brings me great pleasure to introduce in the west gallery today, to you and through you, to all members of this Assembly a very special guest, Mr. Speaker, and that is Sheree Ruller. She is the former director of human resources at Executive Council and she's accompanied today by her partner, Brian Maguire. Mr. Speaker, I say former director of human resources, as Sheree retired a couple of weeks ago, and that was after a very long and distinguished career in the public service.

People in this building are most certainly going to miss Sheree. They're going to miss her quick and quiet wit that she carries with her each and every day and at times the very sharp tongue that Mama Ru would exhibit to so many that worked in this building and served in this building. Her understudy, Drew Dwernychuk, most certainly has been coming along, but I think he is going to have to reach out to Sheree from time to time for some refresher courses on how things move and manoeuvre through the building.

Mr. Speaker, we have a great team working behind the scenes in executive government, making sure that we can get things done on behalf of the people ultimately that we serve in this province. And Sheree has been a very important part of that team and a very important part of the Government of Saskatchewan since we were first elected in 2007 but also long before that.

After we came to office — the Saskatchewan Party had the honour to form government in 2007 — Sheree was instrumental in creating some of the best practices for human resources on the political side of the government. And in doing that job, she drew on her very long and varied experience, Mr. Speaker. Sheree has worked for now three premiers throughout her 24 years in government, and she spent many days — or many years, pardon me; many, many days but many years — working as a consultant in the private sector as well.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to, as I said, miss not only her quick wit and sometimes dry humour, but we most certainly are going to miss her wisdom and experience in this building, not only when it comes to staffing, Mr. Speaker, to recruitment, to training, and all of the things that a human resource professional would do, but she had great wisdom and sage counsel when it came to life in general, whether it be professional life or even personal life, Mr. Speaker. She is a very compassionate person. She is a good listener and someone who isn't surprised by what we may face day to day in each of our, again, professional or personal lives.

That made Sheree the very perfect person to provide, in her own quiet and confidential manner, Mr. Speaker, very direct but very helpful advice and support to all the staff members that work on the executive side of government, in this building and outside, with whatever challenges they might be facing. And sometimes, Mr. Speaker, those folks just needed someone to talk to, and she was always there to listen. Her door was always open to the staff serving the people of Saskatchewan in this building. And we are very grateful on the floor of this Assembly for her generosity, her kindness, and her service, Mr. Speaker. It's meant a lot to each and every one of us.

So I'm happy to report that Sheree had no trouble adjusting to retirement. There's much more time for her to spend with Brian and her two grown children Amanda and John, Mr. Speaker. More time for her to paint. More time for her to read. More time for her to travel. Less time for her to put up with the shenanigans of the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation, Mr. Speaker. And she has trips scheduled to Ireland, Arizona, Sweden among many other destinations.

And I want to thank Sheree again for her decades of dedicated service to the people of the province of Saskatchewan and to the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I want to wish her all the very best, both her and Brian, in all they choose in a very well-deserved retirement, Mr. Speaker. And I'd ask all members to welcome Sheree and Brian to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join briefly with the Premier to offer our heartfelt thanks on behalf of the official opposition to Sheree for her years and years of service to her province and to governments in this province, and to recognize the importance of that service in building the province that we all love. So we thank you, Sheree, and we wish you nothing but the best in your retirement.

And while on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I want to give a nice, warm welcome and introduction to 25 grade 4 students from Lakeview School, Mr. Speaker. What an awesome, brilliant-looking bunch up there, Mr. Speaker. We look forward to visiting with them after question period here today.

I understand that they hiked over through the snow here today. Is that right? Wow, good bunch. And hopefully that snow is gone soon. But it's wonderful to have you here in your Assembly here today.

I want to introduce their teacher as well, Ms. Huber, who has joined us here today. And I believe Mr. Warner is also a teacher but he's a parent chaperone here today as well. We look forward to conversation with them after, their observations and their ideas.

And I want to give a special shout-out to my buddy Oliver Froh up there. Give us a wave, Oliver. This is one awesome guy. He's a great soccer player. I've had the chance to camp with him and paddle up on the Churchill River. His dad and parents are friends. He's a good fisher, Mr. Speaker, and just a real awesome guy. So big shout-out to Oliver and a warm welcome to all these amazing students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that the NDP [New Democratic Party]-Liberal federal government federal tax on carbon continues to make life more expensive for Saskatchewan residents; that the federal Liberal-NDP coalition government continues to be disingenuous with their rhetoric surrounding the carbon tax; and that according to the parliamentary office's analysis, most households will pay more in fuel tax and GST [goods and services tax], as well as receiving slightly lower incomes than they will receive in the climate action incentive payments; despite promises from the federal government that the tax would remain revenue neutral and that the families would benefit, the reality is that families are paying more than they receive.

We in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following actions: to call upon the Government of Canada to immediately end the federal carbon tax and support Saskatchewan's development on the global supplier of food, fuel, and fertilizer.

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

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to present the following petition. The folks who signed this petition wish to bring to your attention the following: the lack of duty-to-consult legislation leaves the taxpayers of Saskatchewan footing the bill for the Government of Saskatchewan's mistakes and losses in the courts; without clear duty-to-consult legislation in place, the Government of Saskatchewan alone is responsible for recognizing when the duty-to-consult is triggered, contributing to a lack of engagement with First Nation and Métis communities, and with little accountability for the provincial government, and often ending in lost court battles.

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 stop the sell-off of Crown lands, and enshrine the duty-to-consult into law by enacting the meaningful duty-to-consult legislation.

miigwech.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatoon Tribal Council Opens Transitional Support Program

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Women being released from the Pinehouse correctional centre will now have a new place to call home. Last Friday I brought greetings to the opening of Saskatoon Tribal Council's brand new transitional support program building located in the Pleasant Hill neighbourhood. I was joined by the member from Saskatoon Riversdale and the member from Martensville-Warman.

The program is called *ikwēskīcik iskwēwak* and means "turning their lives around" in Cree. Eighteen women will be able to access services such as mental health or addictions support, opportunities for education and employment, access to elders, and assistance to regain custody of their children. One of the goals of the transition program is to prevent these women from reoffending after release from custody.

Six women moved into their new home just this last Monday. There are already 100 eligible women on a waiting list. The facility will be staffed 24 hours a day and has shared laundry. Each of the bachelor suites is furnished with a bed, table and chairs, and has a kitchen and bathroom.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we toured the new building, on each bed was a letter to the new occupant, and written on the envelope was, "Made especially for you." The Government of Saskatchewan will support this pilot project over the next three years, contributing 1.2 million in operational expenses.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I now ask all members to join me in wishing STC [Saskatoon Tribal Council] the very best in this Indigenous-led new program. Thank you.

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

Onion Lake Cree Nation Recognized for Advocacy and Treaty Protection

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I rise to recognize Onion Lake Cree Nation, Chief Lewis, Terri Quinney, and the whole team in Onion Lake.

Mr. Speaker, Onion Lake Cree Nation are trailblazers. They are leading the way and providing a shining example of what treaty rights protection is. They are consistently leading the way when it comes to advocacy and treaty protection.

Onion Lake is no stranger to the halls of this Legislative

Building. Mr. Speaker, it wasn't so long ago that Onion Lake and other First Nation filled the gallery, calling for legislative change to our duty-to-consult policy framework. They filled the gallery before and after, and expect them to do it again, Mr. Speaker, until this government stops taking advantage of First Nation and Métis people and legislates duty-to-consult.

And they're not stopping there. Last year they filed a lawsuit against the Alberta government over their sovereignty Act. Last week they filed one against this provincial government over the Sask first Act.

And with that, I would like to say thank you, Onion Lake. You are truly a trailblazer in Saskatchewan in protecting the rights of treaty people in this province. Keep up the pressure. We need you. You are trailblazers. With that, thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

SaskPower Offers Relief to Seasonal Customers

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Saskatchewan is an incredibly diverse province, with towns having their own unique history. But in almost every town in the great province of Saskatchewan there is a post office, a co-op, and a hockey rink. Mr. Speaker, rinks are almost as essential for rural communities as they are for . . . and they are not free to operate. That's why I was pleased earlier this week to hear that SaskPower would be providing relief for 1,400 seasonal customers on their power bills.

Mr. Speaker, SaskPower customers who use large amounts of power are adjusted to demand charge based on the highest power consumption they require at any given time in the year. This is because SaskPower must hold an adequate capacity for those customers in this case for what their needs are.

[10:15]

Mr. Speaker, seasonal customers like rinks also use power in the wintertime and then in the summer. That's why SaskPower is reducing the time period used to calculate demand charges to six months for seasonal customers. As this charge will reset every March and November, this ensures that the rinks do not pay extra in the summer for their usage in the winter. Mr. Speaker, communities, large and small, across the province are set to benefit from . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Next statement, please. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

International Day of Pink

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Last week on April 13 the world celebrated International Day of Pink. Discrimination takes many shapes, whether it's based on race, age, ability, gender, or sexuality. The 2SLGBTQIA+ [two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, intersex, asexual plus] community is no stranger to the bullying and violence that stems from discrimination and hateful beliefs.

While progress has been made towards removing these social

barriers from our society, discrimination still persists. So every year on the second Wednesday of April, people worldwide are encouraged to put on a pink shirt and stand in solidarity with the two-spirit and queer community to continue fighting for equality and acceptance.

Day of Pink is for everyone who has experienced bullying. Day of Pink's purpose is to create a more inclusive and diverse world. It's a day that encourages young people to challenge social norms, ask more of their educators, and stand up against bullying towards their two-spirit and queer peers.

Day of Pink is more crucial today than ever as we can never stop working towards creating a more inclusive world. I encourage all members to join me in celebrating Day of Pink. Let's have the courage to stand in solidarity and continue to fight for equality and acceptance for all. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth Supports Intermunicipal Collaboration

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our government values all of our province's municipal councils and values the work of elected officials, administration, and staff do to support our communities. This week at the annual Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association convention at TCU Place in Saskatoon, some of these achievements were recognized.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was pleased to learn on Tuesday afternoon that the winner of the regional co-operation award at SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] was the P4G Planning District. Short for the Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth, P4G is comprised of the cities of Saskatoon, Warman, and Martensville, the town of Osler, and the RM [rural municipality] of Corman Park.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the work that the P4G group does to ensure a collaborative and coordinated approach to intermunicipal growth is important. The latest projection showed the P4G region reaching a population of 500,000 people in the next 20 years, and based on the current economic climate, anticipates the population could climb as high as 1 million in the region in the next 60 years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth is one example of how collaboration between municipal governments can result in growth that works for everyone — more people, more jobs, and more opportunity for all.

Congratulations again to everyone involved with the P4G Planning District for the leadership they provide and for winning this important regional co-operation award at SUMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Increased Funding for Emergency Medical Services

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very

happy to report our government is increasing annual funding for EMS [emergency medical services] in Saskatchewan by 8.8 million this year. This will support emergency services in 31 communities by adding rural and remote ground ambulance staff, expanding community paramedicine, addressing wage-parity issues, and providing more operational funding for EMS operators.

3.5 million will go directly to supporting the addition of 33 full-time positions in 27 communities. That includes Biggar, Carnduff, Prince Albert, Cupar, Moose Jaw, Melville, North Battleford, Yorkton, Porcupine Plain, and Kindersley. Another 739,000 will help expand the community paramedicine program within the communities of La Ronge, Beauval, Buffalo Narrows, Estevan, and Weyburn. And 2.6 million goes to help contracted EMS providers deal with wage parity, and recruitment and retention issues.

Paramedic Services Chiefs of Saskatchewan President Steven Skoworodko's response was, and I quote:

The investment of \$8.8 million is a strong commitment to addressing ongoing, crucial needs of ambulance services and paramedics in the province. We look forward to ongoing dialogue with the Ministry of Health as well as the SHA to ensure the best patient care is brought to the residents of Saskatchewan.

This, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is growth that works for everyone.

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

Saskatchewan Leads in Economic Indicators

Mr. Friesen: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, on this side of the House we are accused of toxic positivity. But with more great news about our economy, it is another great day in Saskatchewan. Just this morning *Globe and Mail* published an article why GDP [gross domestic product] per capita is becoming the indicator to watch. According to the latest data, Saskatchewan's 2021 GDP per capita was \$65,349. That's second highest among the provinces and 26.8 per cent above the national average.

We have mentioned time and time again in this House that we are leading the nation in multiple economic indicators. Wholesale trade saw growth of 30.3 per cent in February 2022 to February 2023. That's a total of \$4.7 billion. Urban housing starts saw a 53 per cent increase through the first three months of 2023 compared to the same time last year. With growth of 43.7 per cent in merchandise exports from February 2022 to February 2023, we are seeing growth that works for everyone.

Saskatchewan's population grew by 29,307 people to over 1.214 million in 2022. Our province has a growing economy, job opportunities, and great quality of life for all, and that's exactly what we've been promoting on the world stage. And with such positive indicators in this province, it is no surprise that Saskatchewan is being seen as the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Elphinstone-Centre.

Saskatchewan Health Authority Memos to Health Care Facilities

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, for days we've asked the Minister of Health for answers about the hush memo sent just hours before we were on the ground listening to local voices in health care. What did that memo say — you know, the actual memo that was leaked to us?

Please be advised that we are not to coordinate tours or answer questions about our facility to any political parties. If any MLAs or members of a political party request information from Lanigan integrated hospital, please direct them to the process.

Now that the minister has his memos straight, will he apologize for sending this hush memo to silence health care workers in our province?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't send out any memo. Neither did the government. The SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] had sent out a memo which I tabled. It was requested yesterday by their House Leader to table the original memo. I tabled it in its entirety, Mr. Speaker, read it into the record multiple times. There was a misinterpretation of that specific memo that went out to all staff about multiple issues which one of them was, included tours.

Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure that we're maintaining the safety, the integrity, and the dignity within our hospital systems for the patients so they are not disrupted, as well as the staff. This is a fully functioning hospital. We want to make sure that we maintain patient safety and the dignity and also the integrity of our hospital system. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, that minister knows well, we didn't request to tour that facility. We were merely doing outreach in that community. And the memo that was sent is crystal clear: don't answer any questions; don't share any information. That's how tired and out of touch this government has become.

But it's not just the hush memo in Lanigan. It's the nurses who felt that they had to hide their identity to raise their concerns, the ones who told CTV News "It's like we've got a gag order. We're cautioned. Nobody can speak out."

What does the minister have to say about the culture of fear he's created in our health care system that stops front-line health workers from speaking out?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to inform the House of what the process actually happened. The member from Fairview contacted my office in the Legislative Assembly to

organize a tour for them. We don't do that. We directed them to the SHA to be able to provide those tours, no different than my office does if we need to have a tour of a facility. So the member was trying to bypass a process over there. We redirected her to the proper process to make sure it was done in a coordinated fashion.

Mr. Speaker, there was no hush memo. There is no hushing of health care workers. I met with health care workers yesterday. I met with them on Tuesday. I met with them on Monday. I'm meeting with them today. I'm meeting with them tomorrow. We continuously outreach to health care workers so they can provide us feedback and help us make sure that we're maintaining the expectations of the Saskatchewan people within our health care system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, correction. The MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Saskatoon Fairview, the critic for Health, did not request to go to the Lanigan Hospital. That's a correction.

Mr. Speaker, the minister should be listening to local voices in health care, not silencing them. Front-line workers know that our hospitals are facing total system collapse, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's why Tracy Zambory and the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses are calling on this tired and out-of-touch government to form a nursing task force to get to the bottom of the crisis in our ERs [emergency room]. But the minister is ignoring her just like she's . . . ignoring front-line health care workers.

Why doesn't the minister just pick up the phone and say yes to working with our nurses instead of silencing them?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the nurses pick up the phone and they call me, I sit down and I meet with them. I sit down in the emergency rooms in the hospital, in their administrative areas. I sit down . . . As I mentioned the other day, Mr. Speaker, I'm sitting down tomorrow with nurses from a specific hospital in our centre that have over 100 years of experience in emergency medicine. I'm sitting down with them to glean some ideas that we can be able to try to implement to make things more efficient within our emergency rooms.

For them to say that myself, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, or the people on this side of the House don't listen to health care workers is absolutely wrong. These are our family members. These are our friends. These are our neighbours that we're talking to, Mr. Speaker, to always make improvements within our health care system. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Duty-to-Consult Legislation

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Mr. Speaker, First Nation and Métis people in this province are fed up with being ignored by this tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government. That's why I brought

forward my private member's bill, *The Meaningful Duty to Consult Act*. It would require the government to actually listen to First Nation and Métis people before making major changes that impact their rights. This bill is due for a vote later today. Will the Sask Party get on board and support that bill when it comes to a vote?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the bill right here in front of me, and it talks about Aboriginal and treaty rights articulated in section 35 of the *Constitution Act*. What that says is that consultation has to be conducted due to the Constitution. It's right there in law. It's already a law. So it makes the bill absolutely redundant.

But I would ask another question perhaps of the member opposite, Mr. Speaker. She talks about consultation. She talks about consultation, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask her who she consulted with on this bill. For example, the Saskatchewan Mining Association, did the member talk to the Saskatchewan Mining Association? I have. No, no consultations with the mining association. Did the member opposite talk to SUMA, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association? I did yesterday. Guess what? No consultation, Mr. Speaker. I know I'm going to get a few more opportunities to see who she consulted with.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Mr. Speaker, when the government gets the duty-to-consult wrong, it doesn't just impact First Nation and Métis people. It impacts all of us. It costs the taxpayers for losses in court. We all lose when this tired and out-of-touch government fails to get the duty-to-consult right. We know policies aren't enforceable. They have no teeth. Putting lipstick on an old policy will not change how consultation works. Legislation is what we need — provincial legislation. Why doesn't the minister accept that it's time to enshrine the duty-to-consult into law?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, let's certainly talk about consultation. When you put forward a bill, hopefully you've consulted many people on that bill. Did the member talk to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce? You know, Mr. Speaker, I talked to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce about the very bill. They had no idea the bill was even coming to the floor, Mr. Speaker.

[10:30]

Even one other, Mr. Speaker — did the member opposite even have the courtesy to talk to the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, Mr. Speaker? No. She didn't even consult with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner.

And she's standing up here talking about consultation, and she wants it enshrined in legislation? I would say she should try to do some consultation herself before she tells anybody else how

to consult, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Mr. Speaker, had this minister actually listened to my second reading speech last fall, he would have heard who I consulted with.

Mr. Speaker, this government's failure on the duty-to-consult has so many consequences for the Saskatchewan people. Just look at the sale of Crown land and grasslands as one example. Thousands and thousands of parcels have been sold off under this government's watch with no consultation.

And when those lands are gone, they are gone for good. They have tremendous environmental value, and they're used by non-Indigenous hunters and hikers. And First Nation and Métis people rely on Crown lands to exercise their treaty and inherent rights.

To the minister: what good is the treaty right to hunt and gather if there's no Crown left to do it on?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, after learning that actually very, very little consultation was done on the bill, I want to talk about something else that's in the bill. It states in the bill: "the rights recognized pursuant to *The Natural Resource Transfer Agreement, 1930*," Mr. Speaker.

So it's saying that they would support the national resource agreement, Mr. Speaker. Is that the position of the party? Because that's what's in the bill. Is that the position of the party? And if it is, it strikes me really quite curious that she would be at a news conference with Onion Lake Cree Nation that was saying the exact opposite of what's in her bill. In fact, she didn't even just attend that news conference, Mr. Speaker; she spoke at the news conference. That absolutely contradicts what's in her bill.

Which one is it? Do you support the agreement that natural resources are our responsibility, or do you support the Onion Lake Cree Nation?

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Mr. Speaker, the minister didn't even answer the question. To the people that are watching, watch how this government supports you all.

So, Mr. Speaker, the duty-to-consult impacts Indigenous people in many ways, even when it comes to jobs. The Premier has the worst jobs record in the nation, and it's in part because this government isn't working in a meaningful way with First Nation and Métis as equity partners when it comes to economic development and the duty-to-consult. Indigenous people have treaty and inherent rights that are impacted by resource development, and they work in the natural resource sector. They must be consulted when projects are being proposed so that they can be equitable partners.

Does the Sask Party realize that their failure on duty-to-consult is holding us back when it comes to job creation?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, she mentioned treaty land entitlement. I would just inform her that right now we're in negotiations with a couple other possible TLE [treaty land entitlement] agreements. But, Mr. Speaker, this province leads the nation. Over 885,000 acres have been transferred through TLE, Mr. Speaker.

Our government respects the treaties, absolutely, and the treaty land entitlement that goes along with it, Mr. Speaker.

But more importantly, where is that party when it comes to the resource transfer, Mr. Speaker? Where are they? Because I know they've flipped back and forth on that very issue, Mr. Speaker. Previous leaders said that it should be First Nations, have a resource right, Mr. Speaker, and then they flipped on it. Where is their party now on the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement?

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

Bill No. 88 and Jurisdiction over Natural Resources

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — So here's my question, Mr. Speaker. So the best example of this government ignoring the duty-to-consult is Bill 88, *The Saskatchewan First Act*. It's an insult to First Nation and Métis people in this province. It ignores treaty rights of First Nations and the inherent rights of Métis people. And there was zero consultation with rights holders — rights holders, Minister — before and after the bill was introduced.

Now the leadership of Onion Lake is suing this government, calling for the bill to be scrapped. And other Nations are going to be following suit. Will the Sask Party realize this was a mistake and scrap the Sask first Act?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The quandary that they find themselves in, Mr. Speaker, is that her bill acknowledges Natural Resources Transfer Agreement, and yet the Leader of the Opposition has said it's time to walk back the Sask first Act, which they voted for, and it's about asserting Saskatchewan's exclusive jurisdiction over natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, that's the same exclusive . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Come to order. Let's have a little respect going across the floor, please.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's the same exclusive jurisdiction that was laid out in the 1930 Natural Resources Transfer Agreement to Saskatchewan, which was so hard fought for. Until that point, the federal government had withheld from three Prairie provinces what was given to every other province.

Mr. Speaker, is it her position that the Natural Resources Transfer

Agreement should be rolled back, that Saskatchewan should revert to being a second-class cousin within federation, Mr. Speaker? Or is it the position of the NDP that Saskatchewan should not have exclusive control over its natural resources?

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — And this is the government that abandoned the equalization Act.

So, Mr. Speaker, this government could have avoided the mess with Bill 88 if they had done meaningful duty-to-consult. If they had reached out to the treaty rights holders — treaty rights holders; that's First Nation and Métis people — they would have heard that this bill is not acceptable to Indigenous people. This government didn't do any consultations at all, and there's no better example of why we need to enshrine the duty-to-consult into provincial law.

Why won't this tired and out-of-touch government enshrine the duty-to-consult into law, and pass Bill 610?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As members will know, there was some back-and-forth with the federal government last week. Nothing new there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Prime Minister did finally state that the federal government does not intend to take away exclusive control over natural resources, which of course there was no power to do anyway.

But no sooner was that clarified, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition member for Saskatoon Centre attended the news conference that was referenced, announcing legal action against the province. The premise that the province does not have exclusive jurisdiction over natural resources — is that the position of the NDP and of the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan does not have that exclusive jurisdiction? Spoiler alert, we think we know the answer.

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

Ms. Conway: — Boy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government sure doesn't want to speak to its own bill, Bill 88. And that's because this government is facing a lawsuit. It's a mess that is entirely of that minister's own making. This tired and out-of-touch government chose to push ahead with Bill 88 with zero consultation — in her own words at committee, zero consultation — and now all Saskatchewan people will be forced to pay for this fight in the courts.

Does the Minister of Justice realize that her failure to listen, her failure to respect the duty-to-consult, is going to leave Saskatchewan people holding the bag once again?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will take no lessons on duty-to-consult and what consultation means when the member opposite didn't consult with the Treaty Commissioner, didn't consult with the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign

Indigenous Nations], and didn't consult with any of the stakeholders and partners in this province who would be economically impacted by precisely what she is calling for.

Mr. Speaker, the lawsuit that is being referenced here has as its premise that the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement powers — the exclusive jurisdiction that Saskatchewan and all provinces have over their natural resources — should be stripped, should be rolled back. Is that the position of the opposition, that that is what Saskatchewan and their federal puppet masters are advocating for? Is that their position? Because that is a serious, serious ramification for the future of this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, that minister loves to talk about homework but she didn't do her homework on Bill 88. She got it wrong in the Education portfolio and she's getting it wrong in Justice now. It's going to cost thousands of dollars in court costs. It's already set back the relationship between First Nations, Métis people in this province in a serious way that will take years to recover. Does the minister recognize that it was a mistake to bring Bill 88, bring this legislation with zero consultation? Yes or no?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Mr. Speaker, we will always stand up for the people of this province. Mr. Speaker, we will always stand up for what exclusive jurisdiction means in this province and what it means for the resources of this province. Mr. Speaker, make no mistake. Stripping exclusive jurisdiction from the province, which is what they are suggesting they would be doing, would be stripping us over our . . . exclusive jurisdiction over potash, for example, Mr. Speaker, and down the line.

Treaty rights are already enshrined, Mr. Speaker, under section 35 of the Constitution and all provincial legislation. The federal government acknowledges that Bill 88 is constitutional, Mr. Speaker. That language, "exclusive jurisdiction," has been in the Constitution for 40 years. It's what 11 provinces are fighting Bill C-69 over, Mr. Speaker. We are not alone in this. Provinces recognize what exclusive jurisdiction means. The prairie provinces fought damn hard to get the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement. We're not rolling that back.

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

Provincial Education Assessments

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. According to the 2022 annual reports from school boards, only 69 per cent of students in grade 3 were able to read at their grade level. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this means nearly one in three. One in three grade students are not meeting the minimum literacy requirements — one in three, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Stats tell us that students who do not meet grade 3 literacy standards are four times less likely to graduate. What explanation does this government have for their failure to teach basic literacy to our students? Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly this is a priority for the Government of Saskatchewan. As a part of the interim education plan over the last two years during COVID, Mr. Speaker, where we knew that, for example, some young students weren't having that same start that they normally would had, Mr. Speaker, by perhaps their parents keeping them out of kindergarten during the pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, as a part of the interim plan we ensured that literacy particularly, as the member opposite has indicated, reading levels . . . grade 3 reading levels at grade 3, Mr. Speaker, was a priority. Mr. Speaker, as we move through to a long-term education plan that'll see us through 2030, one of the things, one of the four pillars of that plan is a provincial assessment, Mr. Speaker, and certainly literacy is going to be a big part of that.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The issue of Saskatchewan last in the classroom has been going on long before the pandemic. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment, reading comprehension has been in decline for 10 years, always below the Canadian average. In 2018 Saskatchewan ranked third-last amongst the provinces.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, science, mathematics skills have also been in decline for 10 years. In 2015 Saskatchewan students ranked last in mathematics amongst all the other provinces and second-last in 2018. Furthermore, Saskatchewan lacks accountability to parents as we are the only province with no standardized testing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, why is this government content with its decade of decline in student performance? And will they commit today to implementing standardized testing? Thank you.

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

[10:45]

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have seen improvements over a number of years in terms of particularly our reading levels, Mr. Speaker. In 2013-2014, 71 per cent of grade 3 students overall were reading at or above grade level, Mr. Speaker. Prior to the pandemic, that had risen to 75 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, first of all in terms of accountability, certainly there is accountability within the system, Mr. Speaker. Local trustees are elected on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker, and that provides that accountability at a local level.

And in terms of assessment, I'll go back to my first answer, Mr. Speaker. As a part of the long-term education plan, the four pillars of the education plan, the very first pillar of that plan is to develop a provincial assessment system, Mr. Speaker, that will ensure that we have timely results to compare with other jurisdictions, to ensure that teachers have timely results to ensure that they see progress, and to ensure that parents have timely information in terms of how their students are . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Sask Rivers.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Fraser Institute stated the following: "Saskatchewan is the only province in Canada with no province-wide student testing program, leaving the province's students at a disadvantage."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, standardized tests would allow this government, schools, teachers, and parents to see objectively how students are doing. It would provide much-needed accountability to this government and to the public, to parents, to ensure students are getting the best possible education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, will this government commit to adopting standardized, province-wide tests in the interest of greater accountability and transparency? Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll try again for the member opposite. Mr. Speaker, as a part of the four pillars of the upcoming provincial education plan that will take us to 2030, Mr. Speaker, the very first pillar — that has been accepted by me and that will be adopted by every single school division — will be the development of the provincial assessment program to ensure that . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to give the member opposite the answer and she's not even paying attention. She's talking with the other members opposite. So she asked the question. I'm not sure she really is interested in the answer.

But for those individuals that are interested in the answer, Mr. Speaker, as a part of the education plan that will take us to 2030, we'll be developing a provincial assessment system.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Human Services Committee.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Jenson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 101, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2022* with amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill and its amendments be now read a third time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration of the bill on whole on Bill No. 101, and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Deputy Clerk: — First and second reading of the amendments.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the amendments be read a first time?

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 101 — *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2022*

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First and second reading of the amendments.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 101 — *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2022*

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

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 101 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 121, *The Provincial Emblems and Honours Amendment Act, 2022* without amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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 Deputy Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 121 and that the bill be now read a third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 121 — *The Provincial Emblems and Honours Amendment Act, 2022*

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

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 121 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Baseload Power Supply Options and Federal Energy Policies

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for providing the opportunity to try and talk to this important topic. It's going to affect the residents and workers of this province for generations.

I'll be making the following motion:

That the Assembly supports the development of reliable baseload power supply options for the province of Saskatchewan, including the potential deployment of small modular reactors, and condemns the Liberal-NDP coalition for their imposition of policies that will shut down coal and natural gas production without support for Saskatchewan's

energy workers.

I'll now let my colleagues provide more fulsome discussion on this topic.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to be entering my remarks in this 75-minute debate on the motion that was presented here.

Introducing SMRs [small modular reactor] will require deep consultation with Saskatchewan communities. And you know, this government has struggled to consult with communities and citizens in the past. What is their plan to ensure that Saskatchewan voices and concerns are heard?

You know, we do talk a lot about consultations, and you know, when I have done consultations, it's been with treaty rights holders — treaty rights holders, not organizations but treaty rights holders. That's who we've consulted with. So when it comes to SMRs, this needs more consultation and to use one of the minister's words, dialogue. We need to have two-way dialogue when it comes to SMRs in this province. First Nation and Métis communities and leaders have criticized governments in the past for their failure to consult.

And the other thing that's interesting, I was in an estimates committee meeting last night, and we were talking about SMR in one of the committees. And what I found that was interesting was that presently there's no SMR reactor designs approved by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. And that's just the folks that have been giving me this information, and realized, oh well that was interesting.

So when we talk about SMRs, we need to talk to people that are going to be impacted most by SMRs. First Nation and Métis people, the treaty rights holders need to be consulted or, in the government's words, have dialogue.

And also SMRs can take a long time to construct, and as I just said earlier, presently there's no SMR reactor designs approved by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. And they also require specialized work, and I'm interested to know how this is going to be undertaken.

Energy, whether it's traditional, SMRs, or complementary like wind and solar, all play a vital role in our province's approach to power generation. Is this government planning to increase their commitments to renewable energy sources like the wind and solar to ensure that all our eggs are in the nuclear basket and that we've diversified our power grid for the energy needs of today and tomorrow?

The other thing that I'm quite interested in is, this government has no problem in extending their hand to the federal government when it comes to transfers, and they have no problem in spending the federal dollars that they're given. My curiosity, I guess, is what dollars is the provincial government going to be putting into this?

You know, there's a lot of criticism always against the federal

government, and the people that I represent and the people in this province are concerned about the province. They're concerned about what the province is doing to ensure they have good-paying jobs, that they can live affordably, that they can live longer. They're concerned about leaving a future for their children, their grandchildren, and those not yet born.

Any time that we're talking about, whether it's SMRs, we need to think about the future generations. We need to ask ourselves, what are we doing to safeguard their futures, and what are we doing to ensure that we are moving to renewable energies in a way that is responsible, that is fiscally responsible as well as socially responsible?

So energy, whether . . . When we choose a site, like the SMR, we talk about this, and the folks in my constituency have reached out to me. And this is an issue that concerns a lot of people, and there are folks out there as well that don't know much about it.

And we talk about this, or this government talks about it like it's going to be here today, tomorrow, but they don't talk about how long. And like as I said earlier, that presently there's no SMR reactor designs that are approved, and we don't know the cost of building these SMRs. We don't know, and often budgets go over what they say they're going to do, and they take time.

So when we talk about consultation, we have to think about our children, our grandchildren, and those that aren't born. Because when we die, they're the ones that are going to have to live with the consequences of the decisions that we make in this province.

[11:00]

And what I was told as a kid growing up, from my parents, my family, when we protect mother earth, mother earth takes care of us. While we're stripping resources out of mother earth, what are we doing to ensure that our children, our grandchildren, will be able to live? Because we all know, and this is what I heard from my ancestors — we're driven by the dollar — at the end of the day, we can make all the money in the world, but we can't eat money. And we have to think about that.

So when we're thinking about decisions, yes it's really good to grow the economy. It's good to generate jobs, create a cleaner environment. We also have to keep in mind how is that going to negatively impact the ones that come after us.

And this SMR file is a critical potential project for Saskatchewan, both for our economy and also our energy security for our future and the subsequent generational job opportunity for communities involved. And it is very important for the people of this province that this process is clear, transparent, and there's accountability throughout. We need to ensure that PDSA [plan-do-study-act] cycles are happening on this because it's very important that we think about those that come behind and talk to the people that are going to be impacted. We talk a lot about consultation, but I would say treaty rights holders — treaty rights holders, not organizations — need to be consulted.

So I don't have much more to say on this, but I do welcome questions after around this. But when we protect mother earth, mother earth takes care of us. And we can't eat money. And we have to think about our children and those that come behind. We

have to think about protecting the environment and mitigating any negative impact we have to our environment.

So with that, mister deputy deputy speaker, I am going to conclude my remarks. Yeah, I'm going to conclude my remarks on this debate. Thank you.

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

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm also a little bit under the weather.

I second the motion presented by the member from Melville-Saltcoats. For Saskatchewan to prosper in the future, we need to have the energy abundance that goes with longer, healthier lives. For this we need to produce energy that's clean and to participate in the choices we make as communities and as a province.

History has taught us that our energy needs will keep growing. SMRs provide an opportunity to generate dependable, emissions-free baseload power and opportunity to expand Saskatchewan's uranium market and allow our province to take advantage of new economic opportunities and increase Indigenous participation.

Power production through SMRs would also support our Saskatchewan growth plan by delivering on Saskatchewan's climate change strategy, Prairie Resilience, as well as increasing jobs associated with construction and facility operations, nuclear and non-nuclear supply chains, and research and development.

With new energy options emerging, we owe it to our citizens of Saskatchewan and to the future to consider other options objectively and clearly. Like all commercial nuclear reactors, small modular reactors use fusion to generate thermal and electrical energy. They produce zero emissions power and are designed to be smaller than traditional reactors. SMRs are scalable and versatile nuclear reactors that typically produce 300 megawatts of electricity or less. A single 300-megawatt SMR will generate enough clean electricity each year to power 300,000 homes.

They would be manufactured in factories in modules and then shipped to project sites for assembly to reduce costs and shorten construction schedules. The SMRs could deliver affordable, non-emitting energy for many new uses. They could not only supply power to homes, but to offices and businesses, heat for industrial processes, heat to buildings, and energy to produce clean fuels, such as battery charging or hydrogen for transport.

The path forward is for the advancement of SMRs and opportunity to bring as a source of safe and reliable zero emissions energy to power our communities, while meeting the demands of a growing economy and population. SMRs can improve our quality of life, drive economy growth and prosperity, and help our province and Canada as a whole meet its climate goals.

According to the Canadian Nuclear Association, nuclear power is the most efficient power source by land area. And it's more than 15 times more efficient than renewable sources like wind and solar.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, SMR deployment in Saskatchewan could also be an important source of new job creation for the province, generating an estimated 1,700 jobs during construction and an additional 180 jobs during operations. An increase of Indigenous participation in Saskatchewan's natural resource industries could also be attained.

The investment into SMRs has the potential to generate over 5 billion in economic activity between 2032 and '42. Saskatchewan has one of the largest natural reserves of high-grade uranium in the world, with around 85 per cent of production currently being exported internationally. The use of SMRs would increase the annual value of uranium sales, create jobs in northern Saskatchewan, and contribute to our province's finances through royalty payments. Investing in nuclear technology offers further economic opportunities for this important industrial sector by creating supply chains and industries that support SMR operation.

Safety is always a concern when exploring new technologies. Canada's nuclear industry has an impeccable safety track record. It's built on more than 70 years of innovation with safety and environmental protection at its core. Never in Canada has anyone been harmed or injured as a result of the industry's operations. Nuclear plants have many layers of protection, so if there's ever an issue, multiple systems keep the plant safe.

SMRs are an advancement in terms of nuclear power technology and offer even further layers of protection for human safety and the environment. I was surprised to learn that nuclear energy has a stronger safety track record than even renewables. Data shows that renewable energy sources such as wind and solar have significantly higher injury rates as well as death rates per terawatt of energy produced.

In 2021-22, 79 per cent of Saskatchewan Power's electricity was generated from coal and natural gas. The use of SMRs would go a long way in decarbonization of electricity production in Saskatchewan.

There is a growing international trend towards SMRs. The United States is investing US [United States] 3.2 billion to deploy two SMRs by 2027. The United Kingdom is investing 210 million pounds for SMR research and development by early 2030. In addition China, France, Argentina, Poland, and many other countries are at different stages of developing and deploying SMRs.

We have a window of opportunity to lead, as Canada has all the necessary elements: a strong international brand, flexible and performance-based regulator, world-class nuclear laboratories and demonstration sites, a mature supply chain and domestic uranium mining industry, extensive nuclear operating experience, and strong science and technology in related areas like material science, medicine, irradiation, sterilization, food safety.

SMRs support long-term national energy security using Saskatchewan uranium and Canadian technologies. Ontario would see the first SMR project of 300 megawatts constructed at the Darlington nuclear site by 2028. As well, two fourth-generation advanced SMRs would be developed in New Brunswick. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as these SMRs will be

operational before we began, we could learn from their implementation.

As laid out in the strategic plan, SaskPower has to finish their evaluation and make a recommendation, followed by site selection and various regulatory steps. SaskPower is diligently working through the necessary regulatory approvals and licensing requirements, and we plan to make the decision on whether or not to proceed with SMR construction in 2029. Construction would begin shortly after, with the first SMR operational by 2034.

A preliminary business case will be developed later this year. Part of this business case will look at how these changes will affect people's electrical bills. SMRs take about 12 years to develop, which is why we are laying the groundwork now. Nuclear energy is completely clean in terms of emissions. Saskatchewan needs zero-emission baseload generating options such as this, especially with the 2050 goal of net zero emissions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as both solar and wind energy are dependent on weather conditions, nuclear energy could fill the gap with steady, reliable power. Another advantage of SMR is that they don't need a unique site design. Traditional nuclear power plants are designed specifically for the site they will be placed in. The design can't be standardized so parts can be mass-produced, which usually leads to overruns in both timeline and cost.

With that, I acknowledge and support small modular reactors as a safe, reliable, zero emissions energy to complement renewable energy sources by providing stable baseload, clean energy capable of powering Saskatchewan's growing economy and population, while creating new opportunities to export Canadian knowledge.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity here today to speak on this important topic. Specifically I'll read the motion:

That the Assembly supports the development of reliable baseload power supplies options for the province of Saskatchewan, including the potential deployment of small modular reactors, and condemns the Liberal-NDP coalition for their imposition of policies that will shut down coal and natural gas production without support for Saskatchewan workers.

I want to thank the member opposite for posing this question today, as I really do believe it is a very important question that we are facing as a province, and one that . . . It will take a lot of discussion, a lot of conversations, a lot of stakeholder engagement.

I really appreciated my colleague from Saskatoon Centre's comments around the question: how are we leaving the province for the generation after us, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think that SMRs can absolutely play an important role in that future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, reliable baseload power is so important for our province. The people of Saskatchewan expect us in this Chamber to ensure that their needs are met when it comes to responsible governance, and includes responsive and reliable baseload power that is affordable for all. And I'm going to underline affordable. That is a really huge issue that we take on this side of the House, affordability for families when it comes to power.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, small modular nuclear reactors, also known as SMRs — and for the Gen Z folks watching at home, or we hope some of those Gen Z folks are watching at home, this is not to be confused with ASMR [autonomous sensory meridian response] — these are very worth exploring. Not only might they play an important role in our energy future in Saskatchewan, they will also mean more value for Saskatchewan uranium.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this will likely be one of the most important conversations of our time. It will mark a very needed transition and shift to a different source of power that will power our province for years and years to come. I want to ensure that I am on the record today stressing the importance of consultation with stakeholder groups. With every location chosen, communities need to be consulted.

And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that an educational campaign will be needed to get folks on board, although it seems as though the people of Saskatchewan are leaning in this direction. You see polling of support, of near 60-plus per cent support for SMRs. So folks are seeing this; they're learning about this. But I do think that an educational campaign will be crucial.

The SMR file really becomes a critical potential project for Saskatchewan, both for economy, for our energy security in the future, and subsequent generational job opportunities for those communities involved, because we have communities right now that are so affected. And later in the motion we talk about policies of the federal government that are imposing policies that don't work for Saskatchewan and shutting down industries without plans for those folks. That is not how it should be done. Those folks need support from both the federal government; they need support from their provincial government.

So all in all, these projects will become really crucial opportunities for those communities. But I really do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, believe that this process must be clear. It must be transparent. It must have the people of Saskatchewan on board as we move forward. And there has to be accountability for that process regardless of the government engaging in the process.

At the end of the day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it really will come down to a business case presented. We know that SMRs come with huge price tags, in the billions. How will we invest in this technology? How will we refund it? SMRs do come with a number of questions. There's a lot of questions that need to be answered. You know, some questions that I had thought of was: what is the plan to ensure our grid and power generating capacity can withstand the use of SMRs? Are we ready for that? Are we technically . . . As the member opposite mentioned that we may not see these operational until 2034, so we do have that time to do that work needed?

There's also questions as how will SMRs help people in industry.

How will they help industry? How will they develop jobs for folks in those affected communities? How will we help folks electrify their households? Will we have that infrastructure in place to service both the large and small energy needs?

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are quite a few questions in place here. And I think it's also important to stress that SMRs are still something that are being researched and developed. We haven't seen an actual small modular reactor built. So we're in a very theoretical phase, but we need to be open to that opportunity. Saskatchewan needs to be open to that opportunity as this is a crucial, crucial move forward for us.

So as I mentioned, lots of questions. Right now we've got, as the member opposite said, 10 years before we might see an SMR completed in Saskatchewan. So what is our plan now, right now, to start diversifying our energy needs? There are lots of opportunities that we have in this province to continue to diversify our energy needs. But my question is, what can we do right now to also reduce emissions, to address the global crisis that we're seeing in climate change, intense weather situations?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think there is a strong solution in front of us, and that solution is today investing in renewable energy sources so that we can diversify our baseload power by the time an SMR-type power opportunity comes available.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm speaking about wind, geothermal, solar — lots of things that we are blessed for in this province. We have technological advances that are ready, and ready to be deployed in those areas, ready to harness the options. And I don't think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it has to be a this or that. I really do believe that we can continue to support our resource industries in this province while investing, absolutely. Continue to support resources but also, at the same time, using that revenue to continue to invest and diversify our power bundle.

Not only would, you know, renewable energies provide safe, clean energy, it would add to our baseload power. It would support us. It would be ready to implement SMRs if they are the option. But it would also ensure good jobs. It would ensure affordable energy bills. They're great jobs. Mr. Deputy Speaker, questions about jobs. They are great jobs, great jobs. They are.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is an opportunity to see good jobs continued in our resource sector and to create and transition while we see folks losing their jobs. We can transition into other jobs. We can diversify our job market. We know that this is the government that has a five-year record — the worst jobs creation record in the country — at 3 per cent. Why not create more jobs right now in this province? I know, Mr. Speaker, we see an I-don't-care attitude when it comes to the climate, but this is an issue that's facing us today.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, and I mentioned this, I really do believe that investments in renewable energy will create jobs. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a conversation ahead of us about SMRs, which is an important conversation. But I have to stress, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we must be investing today. We are 14 years behind almost every other province. It's time to diversify our energy today and support our industries and create new industries for folks to work in. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will sit down.

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

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Not surprisingly, I will be supporting my colleague from Melville-Saltcoats's motion:

That this Assembly supports the development of reliable baseload power supply options for the province of Saskatchewan, including the potential deployment of small modular reactors, and condemns the Liberal-NDP coalition for their imposition of policies that will shut down coal and natural gas production without support for Saskatchewan's energy workers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, providing the people of Saskatchewan with a safe, affordable, and reliable source of energy is a priority for the Government of Saskatchewan — generating and distributing electricity across the vast province, keeping our citizens warm on a cold winter's day or perhaps a cold spring day as we are just experiencing.

The province's mining and resource sector depends on a safe and reliable energy supply to source and export their products to countries around the world. Our agriculture and food producers rely on this same supply to grow and add value to agri-food products to feed not only Canadians here at home, but to feed a growing world population.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, energy and a reliable supply of energy is a cornerstone for our Saskatchewan economy, indeed for any economy. In short, energy is a critical part of today's society. People expect and deserve a safe, affordable, and reliable source of energy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, SaskPower is investing over \$1 billion on capital in this current fiscal year, including \$120 million to repair, replace, and upgrade transmission infrastructure like substations and power poles, and investing an additional 162 million to sustain and extend the life of the E.B. Campbell and Coteau Creek hydro facilities. SaskPower is continuing construction of the new Great Plains power station near Moose Jaw by investing \$81 million this year. Our Crown corporations will continue to prioritize capital investments that will sustain our baseload power generation and distribution across the province, investments that will support economic growth in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, keeping Saskatchewan utilities affordable is a challenge with the federal Jagmeet-Justin carbon tax, supported by the members opposite, and it's increasing year after year. It's very ironic that while we're keeping energy affordable in Saskatchewan, the members opposite are supporting an economy-killing carbon tax. Unbelievable.

How can they support a carbon tax that's sole purpose is to make energy unaffordable? They're supporting a tax that is, by design, meant to increase the cost of energy to a point that people will no longer be able to afford and they will be forced to live in the cold. Shameful. They promote people first, but the true meaning is the people pay first. The carbon tax makes up 20 per cent of the average residential customer's energy bill and even more for Saskatchewan businesses. The NDP could reduce power bills by nearly 5 per cent if they called their federal leaders, Justin and

Jagmeet, to end the carbon tax.

On September 13th the new Leader of the Opposition was quoted as saying, “In an affordability crisis, we have some of the best rates as a province.” She is correct. As a bundle of utilities, we have the second-lowest rates in the country. An average Saskatchewan family pays over \$700 less than a family in British Columbia, over \$1,300 less than a family in Quebec, over \$3,700 less than a family in Ontario, over \$4,000 less than a family in Alberta, and over \$5,500 less than a family in Newfoundland.

The opposition has zero credibility when it comes to affordability as long as they stand with their leaders, Jagmeet and Justin, who plan to continue the increase of the carbon tax, carbon tax driving up the cost of everything, including gasoline, home heating, and groceries. Remember, when they were selling the carbon tax, they were selling it as not a tax but carbon pricing, and you would get back all that carbon tax in return. My initial thought was wondering why the good people of Saskatchewan would pay a carbon tax in the first place only to have it all refunded later, less the GST of course. That makes no sense at all.

Earlier this month the parliamentary budget officer confirmed, confirmed — wait for it — confirmed, they confirmed household carbon costs will exceed the climate action incentive payments households receive. Are we amazed by this? Shocking — not.

They were not upfront and honest with the good people of Saskatchewan, and those opposition members continue to support their leader, Jagmeet. The member from Saskatoon Nutana was just recently hosting said leader with a meet-and-greet fundraising event in Saskatoon. Yeah, can you believe it?

Would the members opposite tell me again how they are working for the people of Saskatchewan? Tell me how they are making life more affordable in Saskatchewan while hosting their federal leader who is propping up the Justin Trudeau minority government that continues to increase the carbon tax and whose reckless spending, reckless and wasteful spending is increasing the cost of living for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Did the member from Saskatoon Nutana seize the opportunity to share the people’s concerns over the increasing carbon tax? Did she mention that an increasing carbon tax is driving up the cost of everything, including gasoline, heating, and groceries? Did the member from Saskatoon Nutana ask her leader, Jagmeet, why he continues to support Justin Trudeau? Why does he continue to overlook the shortcomings and scandal of this Trudeau government? The people of Saskatchewan want to know the answers.

[11:30]

I have a question of the Leader of the Opposition. Does she support leader Jagmeet?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just revealed this morning, the federal environmental minister and climate activist, Steven Guilbeault announced a newly evaluated social cost of \$247 per tonne of CO₂. He noted that previously the cost of carbon pollution had been evaluated at \$54, which coincidentally was close to the original maximum amount of the federal carbon tax of \$50 per tonne, as proclaimed by former minister McKenna.

So now is the federal minister suggesting the new maximum of the federal carbon tax to be set at \$247 per tonne? The goalposts keep moving and moving in the wrong direction. When will the members opposite stand up for the people of Saskatchewan and have their federal leader Jagmeet withdraw his support of Justin Trudeau’s minority government? The NDP making life unaffordable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Jagmeet-Justin government says you can have a strong economy and pay an increasing carbon tax. However they will not reveal the true impact of an increasing carbon tax on the economy and on the cost of living for Canadians. Mr. Guilbeault is quick to come out with a social cost but not a cost to Canadians or the economy. Stop this carbon tax insanity and make life affordable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, SaskPower is projecting increased debt over the next five years due to capital investments required to support growth and costly federal regulations to achieve a net zero emissions power grid by 2035. Following these federal regulations requires SaskPower to explore and possibly implement some nuclear power generation options to its mix of hydro, solar, wind, natural gas, and CCS [carbon capture and storage] coal generation. On SaskPower’s website, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there’s a place you can go, and it’s where your energy comes from. I encourage people to go have a look at that. It’s very informative.

Current federal regulations require the requirement of all conventional coal generation by 2030, and for electrical utilities to achieve a net zero greenhouse gas emissions electrical system by 2035. Our government has been very clear that this is simply not possible. Saskatchewan’s electrical demands require a baseload power currently served by coal, natural gas, and hydro. The final plans for SaskPower’s electrical supply will include import agreements and potential deployment of small modular reactors.

The feasibility of nuclear power in Saskatchewan has been studied, and based on a 2021 Conference Board of Canada report, this option has the potential to meet Saskatchewan’s power needs. General Electric’s GE Hitachi BWRX-300 has been chosen for further consideration to be Saskatchewan’s future zero-emitting reliable baseload power source. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m pleased to enter into the discussion here today with respect to the motion.

I always get a kick out of these guys, Mr. Speaker. There’s the ability on some matters to find solid common ground to represent ourselves with strength. And you know, it’s always the tacky politics, Mr. Speaker, for these guys that trump representing the interests of Saskatchewan people. And I guess it’s probably why, you know, they continue to lose for Saskatchewan people on some of the very important principled matters that we should be advancing for Saskatchewan people.

And I like members opposite, but you know, your speeches shouldn’t defy the facts, Mr. Speaker. They should be consistent

with the facts. You know, I heard the last member going on about the carbon price and trying to insinuate all sorts of things. You know, what I'll say — and he knows this — is, you know, we don't support the federal carbon tax. We've been clear on that front. Our leader's been clear on that front. We've been clear on the floor of this Assembly. But we know these guys don't want to admit that that's the position of this side because it doesn't fit their political narrative, Mr. Speaker, doesn't fit their sort of cheap politics that they want to play in the province.

But the failure here is a failure for Saskatchewan people because there's some common ground that we could find. We're not going to agree in all areas, and we're not going to have the exact same mind on these things, but there's a way we could go about these things that would be principled and that could actually get the job done that could move the yardsticks for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. But you know, not for these guys.

So of course we don't support those federal policies like the carbon tax, Mr. Speaker. We've been clear about that. Now we see the Sask Party government though, Mr. Speaker, taking control of that carbon tax, so it will be the Sask Party carbon tax. What we don't see is a stitch of relief coming from that to Saskatchewan people. So a whole bunch of talk from those folks opposite, a whole bunch of noise, a bunch of political grandstanding. Now they are taking over the program, Mr. Speaker, going to collect the money but not offering any relief back to Saskatchewan people.

So they're going to collect it for SaskPower, for example, Mr. Speaker. They're just going to stick it on the bills of Saskatchewan people, driving up costs, but they're not offering any of that relief back to Saskatchewan people. It doesn't make any sense. You know, and not only aren't they offering any relief, they're not turning the dial where they could in a real meaningful way by advancing renewable power and energy efficiency retrofits right now across Saskatchewan. What's the benefit of that, Mr. Speaker? Well we could create thousands of jobs across our province. We could make power more affordable for Saskatchewan people.

Again of course we know these guys here, they're the tax-and-squander bunch, Mr. Speaker, who'll just stick the cost of that on the backs of Saskatchewan people. The biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history, Mr. Speaker, bigger power bills, bigger energy bills, and instead of using some of those dollars to provide some relief and invest in renewables and energy efficiency retrofits that would bring bills down, that would create thousands of jobs and yes, reduce emissions and help us live up to our environmental obligations on these fronts, we have a government that, you know, they're more interested in political spin and tacky rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, and continuing to fail the good people of Saskatchewan.

You know, I was in committee the other night with the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker. And you know, I was asking him a bit about this. I was asking him, you know, well what case are you making to make sure that producers in this province — as stewards of the land and in their role around sequestration, around things like grasslands and wetlands and practices across the farm that are sequestering carbon — what case are you making to create an offset or a rebate? And you know, the Agriculture minister couldn't say a thing. I asked him, well what

case have you made to the Environment minister, Mr. Speaker, his Environment minister? No case at all, Mr. Speaker.

So you know, these guys, they go around, Mr. Speaker, and take folks for granted. They go meet with good folks like the stock growers and producers of this province and they hear these things, Mr. Speaker. But when the rubber hits the road, they're doing nothing to actualize and make happen some of the things that we could be doing, Mr. Speaker.

So of course we don't support the federal carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, but it's a reality right now. And we expect our government to be able to put some mechanisms and actions in place that would provide relief to Saskatchewan people by way of costs, that could enable renewable power and create jobs and drive down costs and drive down emissions and to respect the role of agriculture on this front. Producers who don't have options on this front, they just take that price, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we've pushed for years for natural gas and for propane for the cost of grain drying to be exempt, Mr. Speaker. And you know, nothing from this government. You know, we get a noise box over there, the member from Kindersley, who wants to shout through a speech. That's his prerogative. He doesn't say much from his feet in this Assembly and that's his choice. Maybe that's how he wants to rep his constituents. And he can wail away during this speech, you know, Mr. Speaker. I have poor hearing in this ear anyways, so I can just turn it this way. You know, Stephanie tells me this all the time, Mr. Speaker.

But with respect to the changes that were brought forward by Stephen Harper around phasing out coal, Mr. Speaker, and that are being continued by the federal government, you bet Saskatchewan workers and those workers in those communities deserve much better support from this provincial government and the federal government. They deserve answers, Mr. Speaker.

It was a long time ago that Stephen Harper announced the phase-out of coal, Mr. Speaker, and of course that's continued under the current federal government. What we haven't seen in the meantime is the kind of conversation and supports and honest answers that the people in Estevan and Coronach and all through the South deserve, Mr. Speaker.

And then when it comes to the question around SMRs, well of course SMRs should be considered, full consideration for being part of the power generation of our future, Mr. Speaker. We've got the world's uranium industry — the best uranium industry — in Saskatchewan. That's important to our North, and that's important in providing fuel to the world. Playing a role right now in displacing Russian fuel in Ukraine, Mr. Speaker, Russian fuel to other markets, displacing that fuel. That's an amazing resource.

And when it comes to SMRs, we need to make sure we're doing this in an even-handed way. We deserve a business case. We need to make sure that people understand what the costs are going to be of these choices. We need to make sure we're making the choices in the best interests of Saskatchewan people, choosing the technologies that would work for Saskatchewan, that would maximize value for our province in that important industry as well, Mr. Speaker.

And actually to date, it's a bit concerning. You know, SMRs should be fully considered, they need to be, but we have a government, again, that can't put forward, sort of, the business case, Mr. Speaker. And you know, time is ticking by and we need to be acting on our power generation, but Saskatchewan people deserve to know what those costs will be. They need to know what the best response is.

We know as well that right now, turning the dial and cranking up renewable power, Mr. Speaker, wind, solar, and then also energy efficiency retrofits, are things that we should be doing now. The fact that this government's been such laggards on this front has of course hurt our economy, Mr. Speaker. And it hurt Saskatchewan people by way of cost of living, impacted our ability to reduce emissions, Mr. Speaker, as well. And of course, you know, we have a government that instead, you know, sticks the PST [provincial sales tax] onto construction labour for Saskatchewan people, that made that matter so much worse.

You know, we will always fight for better supports for that energy-producing region, Mr. Speaker. SMRs should be a full part of that consideration. You look at the complement. You got renewables that will be a piece of that as well with ever evolving storage options, Mr. Speaker. Hydrogen is presenting new opportunities. We owe it to Saskatchewan people to build a complement of power generation that's in their best interests economically and from a power perspective.

And then of course with respect to rolling over to the federal government and losing when they deal with the federal government, this is a government that continues to lose for Saskatchewan people. And we see that on equalization, Mr. Speaker, where this government has basically thrown in the towel in fighting for a better deal and representing our interests out here in Saskatchewan and through Western Canada on equalization. They tossed in the towel, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people deserve less tacky politics. They deserve more leadership that represents their interests.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

[Applause]

Mr. Nerlien: — Well I'd like to thank the members opposite for their round of applause.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for providing the opportunity to speak to a very, very important topic that will affect the residents and workers of this province for generations. Our current 5400 megawatts of electrical production is made of 65 per cent carbon-based sources, 21 per cent hydro, and 13 per cent renewable.

It's estimated by 2030, after continuous economic growth — which we have all discussed in this Chamber — in this province, Saskatchewan Power estimates that we will require 7000 megawatts of power production to cover our needs. SaskPower has also committed to having 50 per cent of that generation being produced from renewable sources. That leaves the remainder of 3500 megawatts sourced from some source of reliable, dependable baseload power that is not carbon derived, according to our current federal government.

[11:45]

The most obvious choice would lead us to nuclear energy. We have a responsibility to reduce emissions and no one is debating that. But as we look for ways to reduce emissions, we would like our federal government to recognize the unique characteristics of this region in Canada. We are the only jurisdiction to have 65 per cent of our energy production currently derived from fossil fuels. In Saskatchewan the greatest potential to reduce our emissions is through our electricity generation sector.

We know the potential for renewables is limited, given their intermittent nature. We don't have a lot of hydro like other provinces and certainly cannot depend on hydro power sourced from any east-west energy corridor. So we need to look elsewhere for reliable emission-free baseload power. That's where small modular reactors come into play. We know deployment of SMRs are a ways off, but we're bullish about their potential.

Four grid-scale SMRs would reduce the emissions from Saskatchewan's electricity generation sector by an amount equal to taking 700,000 passenger vehicles off the road each year. We think SMRs can be transformative technology. That's why we're working closely with Alberta, Ontario, and New Brunswick on development and deployment of reactors. We collaborated recently with those provinces on a nuclear development strategy that highlighted how SMRs can provide safe, reliable, and zero-emission energy to power our growing economy and population.

In this same spirit of co-operation, we're looking for the federal government to be financially invested and a committed partner. At present, no federal funding envelope has eligibility for SMRs. This needs to change. The federal government has already shown a willingness to invest in major provincial projects that reduce emissions. The recent bailout of Muskrat Falls hydroelectricity project in Newfoundland and Labrador is an example. It's worth noting that SMRs that Saskatchewan is considering would reduce emissions as much as Muskrat Falls at a much lower cost.

If the federal government wants to make good on its Paris commitment, then it needs to start working with Saskatchewan rather than working against us whether it's financially, regulatory, and implementing all of this in a realistic time frame.

Currently coal-fired electrical generation in Saskatchewan is to be retired by 2030 and natural gas by 2035. Those extremely tight parameters, if they are strictly enforced, will result in overwhelming capital expenditures in this province to convert our energy supply over to net zero by 2035 as our current federal government is legislating. There is no other jurisdiction in Canada that faces as significant a capital investment requirement as we will to get close to their 2035 mandate.

In addition to their lack of consideration for who and how it may affect, our current Liberal-NDP federal coalition government is also making it extraordinarily difficult for SaskPower to plot their transition away from carbon-emitting electrical supply to non-emitting. They are constantly moving the goalposts.

For example, in 2018 the feds decided to amend the reasonable coal retirement regs that were established by the Harper government in 2012. In 2019 the feds decided to include natural

gas in their emission regulations. Again in 2019 they implemented a carbon tax that was only going to max out at \$50 a tonne. In 2020, oops, just kidding. Feds decided that \$170 a tonne carbon tax by 2030 is more reasonable. In 2023 they decided, let's implement the clean energy regulations that will make it even more expensive and difficult to reach our original plan to get to net zero by 2035.

Even this morning, federal Environment Minister Guilbeault is floating a trial balloon that he thinks the social cost of carbon is \$247 a tonne. Note they started at \$50 a tonne, then \$170 a tonne. Rest assured in a couple of months, the NDP-Liberal coalition will be changing the goalposts again and carbon tax will be targeted at \$250 a tonne.

So what is this just transition going to look like? First off, it is going to result in significant economic and job loss for any of the communities involved, a fact that is being dismissed by our federal coalition government when creating their 2035 dictate. Economic Development Estevan has predicted 350 job losses following the closures of units 4 and 5 at the Boundary dam power station, with the population expected to drop by 635 persons.

Coronach is expecting to be hit harder. A study for the town projected it could lose 573 people and 388 jobs. GDP could fall by \$390 million and household income could see a \$36 million decline. They only had a population of 612 in the 2021 census.

Don Braid, a political columnist for the *Calgary Herald*, had these interesting observations in an article January 12th, 2023:

Past efforts [by any Liberal federal government] to help transition workers, from the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery crisis to the shift away from coal-fired electricity, has proven that Ottawa has had no workable plans, provided few useful benefits, and revealed both chaotic disorganization and appalling bureaucratic lassitude.

The facts come from the federal auditor general whose office released a devastating report on transition efforts last year.

"Overall, we found that Natural Resources Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada were not prepared to support a just transition to a low-carbon economy for workers and communities," the report says.

The Liberals started this process in 2019. More than two years later the auditor general found the government "did not have an implementation plan to address a transition that involved a variety of workers, geographies, and federal and other stakeholders."

And yet they push on despite enormous risks, eager to shuffle workers in their efforts to reach emission targets.

Much of the federal project money is aimed at diversifying local economies, but had little to do with coal workers. In Alberta and Saskatchewan, 83 per cent of the funding went directly to municipalities.

Ottawa doesn't even know if it did any good. Without measuring

and monitoring program outcomes, the agencies could not demonstrate how the funded projects met the objective to support a transition to a low-carbon economy for affected workers and communities, said Environment Commissioner Jerry DeMarco, who has prepared the report.

In our view, this represents a significant missed opportunity as the coal phase-out is the first of several transitions to a low-carbon economy facing Canadian workers, communities, and government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is much more that has been said in the media and in public about the proposed transition away from fossil fuels. But I think we can all agree that the conversation around SMRs is an extremely important one, and to that end, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think I will just acknowledge the good work of my colleagues on this file, recognize that the SMR conversation is going to continue for a number of years.

There is an incredible amount of work and consultation that will take place over the next number of years and we look forward to that evolution of that discussion. And to that point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the motion put forward by my colleague from Melville-Saltcoats. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am very happy to enter into debate with my colleagues today.

I really want to get something on the record here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The member from Saskatoon Centre said — and I don't have time to pull up the *Hansard* yet. It doesn't come until 3 o'clock — but I heard "stripping resources." What does the member from Saskatoon Centre mean by stripping resources?

Saskatchewan has the most strongest environmental record, the strongest environmental worker, the strongest people in the province handling our resources, harvesting all of everything that we produce here to the best . . . In any global standard, we are the top. And I'm very curious as to what she means by that statement.

We do not strip anything in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our oil, our gas, our uranium, coal, potash, helium — everything that's produced in our non-renewable sector, in our renewable sector, nothing is ever stripped. Saying that we're stripping something out of our environment is insulting to the workers. It's insulting to the workforce. It's insulting to all of our bureaucrats in the Ministry of the Environment.

We have unbelievably strong environmental regulations. And I'm very proud of everything that's done in this province.

There's something very important too we have to talk about, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The members opposite talked a lot about renewables and different things, and I think something that has to be absolutely stressed. The Minister of the Crown Investment Corporations, I've talked about this many times, but they have an app on your phone, and you can go on it any time. And on that app, it's telling you right now where your power comes from. It is an absolutely important tool. So the horrible snow outside. We all want clean baseload electricity. And they talked a lot about

renewables and how great they are and how useful. They have a use, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but you have to have that in context. So right now, our wind . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Do not use a prop in your speech, please. Thank you.

Mr. Keisig: — I apologize, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It was strictly for my information.

So currently, our wind-generating fleet, we have 615 megawatts, and as of right now, we're generating 243. So that's a 33 per cent efficiency of your total production capability. Yeah, simple math. On our solar fleet, we have 30 megawatts of solar, and currently, just imagine what we're producing today, right now. Two, according to the app, 2 megawatts. That's less than 7 per cent efficiency.

You cannot run a modern society on unreliable electricity. It is that simple. It is a safety, it is a health, it is for industry, for people, for our entire province — we need baseload electricity. And it has to be affordable. It has to be reliable. And it has to be delivered to every Saskatchewan citizen.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the motion brought forward by the member from Melville-Saltcoats and look forward to the continuation of the debate. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The 65-minute period has expired. The 10-minute period, question-and-answers period, will begin. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To the member for Regina Northeast: your government has a history of having projects balloon over budget like the Global Transportation Hub. What has the minister . . . What has the member of Regina learned from the mismanagement to ensure that Saskatchewan's tax dollars are not wasted?

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

Mr. Grewal: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have done extensive consultations with the public and Indigenous stakeholders, and this consultation is going to continue for years to come. We are committed to ensuring that treaty and Indigenous rights are protected and respected. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We never get a straight answer from the opposition, but maybe we'll get one now. They say they publicly oppose their leader in Ottawa, but we don't see any proof of that ever. So why would they not openly denounce him in public, when we are getting regulated into oblivion with these taxes that keep getting piled on and piling on?

To the member from Saskatoon Meewasin: do you support shutting down all coal-fired generation in the province? And if so, what would you replace it with? And most importantly, how would you pay for it?

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you so much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, what started out as a good conversation about SMRs — the challenges, the merits, the harmful policies of the feds on our coal and natural gas industry — was rehashed into a tit-for-tat about the carbon tax. Old, rehashed, settled debates.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan deserve better. And on this question, the people who are affected by the phase-out in coal started by their federal friend, Mr. Stephen Harper, they deserve to know what this government is planning to do to assist those workers who are seeing their jobs eliminated.

[12:00]

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm glad the member for Kindersley asked a question about the coal industry. What is your government actually doing to proactively support workers in high-emission industries like coal as they are being wound down?

The Deputy Speaker: — Northeast . . . Actually I'll ask the member from Lloydminster, please.

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This opposition continues to run down our economy and the industries that keep us warm and feed us on those cold December nights. They stand idly by and watch as their federal counterparts impose taxes and policies that will devastate Saskatchewan's ability to provide reliable baseload power to its citizens.

To the member from Regina Rosemont: if not coal or natural gas, how should Saskatchewan ensure reliable power on the coldest days of the year?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think the member heard the speech that was offered or the entries. Of course this opposition has been clear we are opposed to the federal carbon tax, Mr. Speaker. And we support the full consideration of all the options, Mr. Speaker, to make sure we serve the needs of Saskatchewan people in our power generation now and moving forward. We need to do it in a way that's most affordable, Mr. Speaker, and creates those jobs.

SMRs are certainly a full part of that consideration, Mr. Speaker. We know of course that Stephen Harper had phased out, announced the phase-out of coal in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. This is an industry where many livelihoods depend on, Mr. Speaker. And it's incumbent on the provincial government and the federal government to be working with those workers out of coal-fired generation to make sure that they're supported moving forward, Mr. Speaker. And we just haven't seen that, Mr. Speaker. They deserve that. Instead we see a government . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Next question, please. I recognize the

member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, 10 minutes just isn't enough. I didn't even get to some of the notes I had about coal and natural gas. You know, Mr. Speaker, I think we've said it a couple times, their federal leader, the former prime minister Stephen Harper, started the phase-out of coal.

So to the member from Last Mountain: what will this government do to invest in Saskatchewan residents to develop specialized skills needed for those folks who are losing their jobs because their federal friends are phasing out coal? And what are they going to do to ensure that those workers are prepared to work in the SMR industry that they are trying to build?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't know what federal friends the member opposite is referring to. I do not attend any federal friends' fundraisers in the evenings like they do. But who am I to judge? We will always support our energy workers. We are adamant in our love for pipelines, the need for more transportation to get our products to port, to market. And we will never, ever back down from that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Talking about federal friends . . . And I'm glad the member from Regina Rosemont brought up the carbon tax. It seems to be a bit of a division on that side of the House. I will say, though, it's over 30 per cent of our natural gas bill. So to the member from Regina Rosemont, if you actually denounce the carbon tax, are you going to produce a document that actually shows that you've talked to your federal leaders denouncing this carbon tax? Yes or no?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, you know, news flash for the member from Saskatoon. This is all recorded in here. It's on video. *Hansard* is there. So we're clear, Mr. Speaker, we don't support the federal carbon price. And you bet our leader . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. I recognize the member. He can finish, please.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So of course, not only do we see those things here in public, recorded and on video, we also have those things communicated directly, Mr. Speaker. Our leader has been clear with any federal leader on these matters, Mr. Speaker, certainly including Mr. Singh as well, Mr. Speaker. And that's how we'll always stand up for Saskatchewan. Unlike those guys who threw in the towel on equalization, Mr. Speaker, and rolled over for Stephen Harper and sold out Saskatchewan people.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. To the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood: does the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood have a detailed plan to ensure that toxic waste will be stored in a manner that is safe and reliable for Saskatchewan residents and the environment?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Keisig: — I honestly thank the member for the question. We were just discussing this with the member from Regina Northeast before we came into the Chamber. It's very important to know that that — what she calls nuclear waste — is spent fuel. And there is technology coming on line and we are going to be able to harvest the rest of the energy in that spent fuel.

And it's also important to note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the entire global nuclear waste would fit into half of Mosaic Stadium. It is a minuscule portion of . . . It takes a minuscule part of environmental footprint and it has potential for us to be able to use more of it in the future. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government is committed to providing sustainable baseload power for our citizens. However our federal government is one of the only members in the G7 [Group of Seven] advocating for a timeline on shutting down coal production entirely. SaskPower will be required to retire 1400 megawatts of conventional coal-fired generation by the end of 2029. To the member of Saskatoon Centre: do you support the federal government's commitment to end coal production by the end of 2029? Yes or no?

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — What I support is meaningful duty-to-consult, all members in this province.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm going to hone in my question here in the last little . . . few minutes. To the member from Cannington . . .

[Interjections]

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 610

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Ms. Nippi-Albright that **Bill No. 610** — *The*

Meaningful Duty to Consult Act be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — It is my duty, pursuant to rule 27, to advise the Assembly that this item of business has been previously adjourned three times and cannot be further adjourned. At the conclusion of the debate or at the normal time of adjournment, whichever is reached first, every question necessary to dispose of this motion shall be put.

I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to speak again to my private member's bill, Bill No. 610, *The Meaningful Duty to Consult Act*.

I just want to say, as a mother and a grandmother, our land is very important to us. That is what connects us as Nations to who we are as a people, is our land. And when I was doing my studies in my master's program this is something that I was very curious about — duty-to-consult, especially in this province. Knowing that there is federal legislation, I was curious why there wasn't provincial legislation.

And as a traditional First Nations person who accesses our traditional lands on traditional territories, seeing that more Crown land is being taken away, sold off, and not being accessed by my relatives, it was very concerning. And it is very concerning. We only have 10 per cent of Crown land left in this province for hunting, gathering, picking medicine, for snowmobiling, for hiking. We don't have a whole lot.

Environmentally, Crown land is important. And it's important that we protect the lands that we have today. This government may not care to protect those lands, although they are by law to protect those lands. You know, think of 1867, the Royal Proclamation. Think about all of that. These lands, Crown lands, were set aside for the first peoples of this land.

And in Saskatchewan we have treaties that were signed in this province. And in those treaties it talks about protecting the Crown lands for Indigenous people. It talks about ensuring that lands are set aside for us to use. But over the years, since 2007, over 2 million acres of Crown land have been sold with little meaningful duty-to-consult.

And I introduced, I thought . . . I went out to consult and ask. I spoke at FSIN Assembly. I spoke at the duty-to-consult gatherings they had and at the TLE gatherings they had. I went extensively two years to the treaty rights holders. And no, I didn't go to the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, because they're not a treaty rights holder. I went to the treaty rights holders in this province that are impacted by the sale of Crown lands and leases. That's who I went and spoke to. That's who I went and spoke to, and I've done extensive consultation.

I went as a community developer, a former community developer. My role as a former community developer is going to the grassroots and asking their input. That is exactly what I did. I went to the grassroots people, the users of the land, the treaty rights holders. That's who I went to see.

Although . . . And those watching, we have the minister heckling again. So that shows the respect he shows for consultation in this

province.

And I'm hoping the members in this Assembly will support this important bill that I presented, because it's about protecting the Crown land that we have left. It's about protecting that for all citizens of this province. It's about protecting the taxpayers of this province, because it's costing you money every time this provincial government is taken to court, and when they lose.

I introduced my bill last spring, Bill 609. And this government has shown us through their actions why we need to enshrine duty-to-consult into law. They have sold — and just recently — the Crown lands in the Touchwood area, a large, large section of land that's been up for lease. The Nations themselves were not even included in being able to bid on that because of the criteria in place.

Instead, you know, when I think about why we need to enshrine duty-to-consult in this province, we all know policy is not enforceable. Legislation is. Legislation is enforceable. It has teeth. Policy has no teeth.

[12:15]

So you can put lipstick on it all you want, change the cover, change the name, tweak the here-and-there; the matrix system does not change. And the onus . . . The government themselves can decide themselves when and if duty-to-consult will be triggered, not the treaty rights holders.

So why we need to have this enshrined, this government has embarked on a closed-door separatist tour. They went ahead in spite of the people, the Indigenous people's repulsive response to the 1969 White Paper. They went ahead last year and released their white paper. Had this government been in touch and had the pulse of the Saskatchewan community, they would have known how their white paper would have triggered the Indigenous people because of the 1969 White Paper.

After their white paper that they released, they went ahead and introduced and passed Bill 88, *The Saskatchewan First Act*. In committee, this gallery was full of First Nation and Métis people that were opposed to this — yet the minister kept saying, we are dialoguing. There was no consultation, absolutely none. Instead the government went to non-treaty rights holder like FSIN and had a cordial discussion. But yet they ignored the users of the land, the people, the treaty rights holders that were in this very gallery in March.

And in the creation of that white paper and that Bill 88, they did not consult with First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan. It shows how badly we need to enshrine duty-to-consult into law. When this government gets the duty-to-consult wrong, it impacts everyone in this province. It makes it harder for good projects to go forward and create jobs for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, especially when this government does not consult. And it leads to more and more court cases against this tired and definitely out-of-touch government.

Just a few days ago, last week — I know this was brought up — I sat with Onion Lake. I was a guest at their press conference that they had when they filed a court case against this provincial government regarding Bill 88. And at that press conference, had

anybody here in this room paid any attention, they would have heard from Onion Lake Cree Nation chief, BTC [Battlefords Tribal Council], FSIN, Ministikwan. The leaders there say specifically the failure, why that bill is being challenged, is because the failure of this government to do any consultation.

That is the key reason that Onion Lake is taking this government to court on Bill 88, because there was absolutely no consultation, no duty-to-consult. And Onion Lake isn't the only First Nation taking this government to court for failing to respect the treaty and inherent rights of First Nation and Métis people. Carry The Kettle, Waterhen Lake, Witchehan Lake, Pasqua First Nation, Ochapowace, Cumberland House, and the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan all launched legal actions against this government.

And across the board, this government's failure to respect the duty-to-consult is a key issue in all those cases. These Nations are fighting back against this government and it's Saskatchewan people who are going to be left paying the price. That's why *The Meaningful Duty to Consult Act* is needed, so that instead of fighting against First Nation and Métis people, we can have an approach based on working together and in meaningful partnership.

That's what this bill is about. So I ask all members here in this House . . . And many of the government MLAs have First Nation and Métis communities within your constituencies, so I ask you to speak and stand up for those Nations that are within your constituencies. And I ask you to protect your citizens from the ongoing cost that it's going to cost them each time their government loses in court.

So I ask all members to support this bill because we want to know what kind of Saskatchewan do we want to build. And we talk about Indigenous people being meaningfully engaged. Well you know what, here's an opportunity to walk your talk.

We don't want a province where we're further divided. With Bill 88 the progress that has been made with First Nation and Métis people, the trust that was starting to begin, you quashed that. You quashed that with Bill 88. So how much further are we going to be divided here?

When we work with First Nation and Métis people, we have to respect the treaty and inherent rights. And I've said this in this Chamber in my inaugural speech, that treaty education is not required, is not required for all MLAs. And you know what, that is sad. Because how are you — how are we all? — going to respect and honour the treaties when our own MLAs don't get that treaty education?

We have to respect the treaty and inherent rights, and we have to respect meaningful duty-to-consult. We have to walk together on meaningful reconciliation, not just two sides talking about the treaty territories. Not that. We have to walk our talk when we talk about consultation. We have to talk that; we have to walk that. It's no longer acceptable.

And you're going to see more and more court challenges against this provincial government, and the taxpayers of this province are going to be paying the cost of your losses and mistakes.

So I ask you and I implore you, think about the treaty rights

holders in this province. Think about meaningful duty-to-consult, and that we need provincial legislation. And that would be the right thing to do for the people in this province, is to legislate provincial duty-to-consult in this province. So I ask you to support Bill 610. And I truly believe if you support that, that will help in building the mistrust against this government.

So thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member from Saskatoon Centre that Bill No. 610, *The Meaningful Duty to Consult Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — Those in favour of the motion please say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion please say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — Call in the members, please.

[The division bells rang from 12:25 until 12:26.]

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member from Saskatoon Centre that Bill No. 610, *The Meaningful Duty to Consult Act* be now read a second time. Those in favour of the motion please stand.

[Yeas – 7]

Nippi-Albright	Vermette	Wotherspoon
Teed	Saraauer	Conway
Bowes		

The Deputy Speaker: — All those opposed to the motion please stand.

[Nays – 38]

Moe	McMorris	Reiter
Merriman	Harpauer	Morgan
Duncan	Tell	Wyant
Makowsky	Marit	Bradshaw
Kaeding	L. Ross	Eyre
J. Harrison	Carr	Hindley
Skoropad	Buckingham	Fiaz
Lambert	Dennis	A. Ross
Ottenbreit	Francis	C. Young
Steele	Bonk	McLeod
Friesen	Grewal	Nerlien
Keisig	Lemaigre	Jenson
D. Harrison	Wilson	

Procedural Clerk (Ms. Drake): — Mr. Deputy Speaker, all

those in favour of the motion, 7; all those opposed, 38.

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

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

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved that this House do now adjourn. 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 1:30 p.m. Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:30.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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