



THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

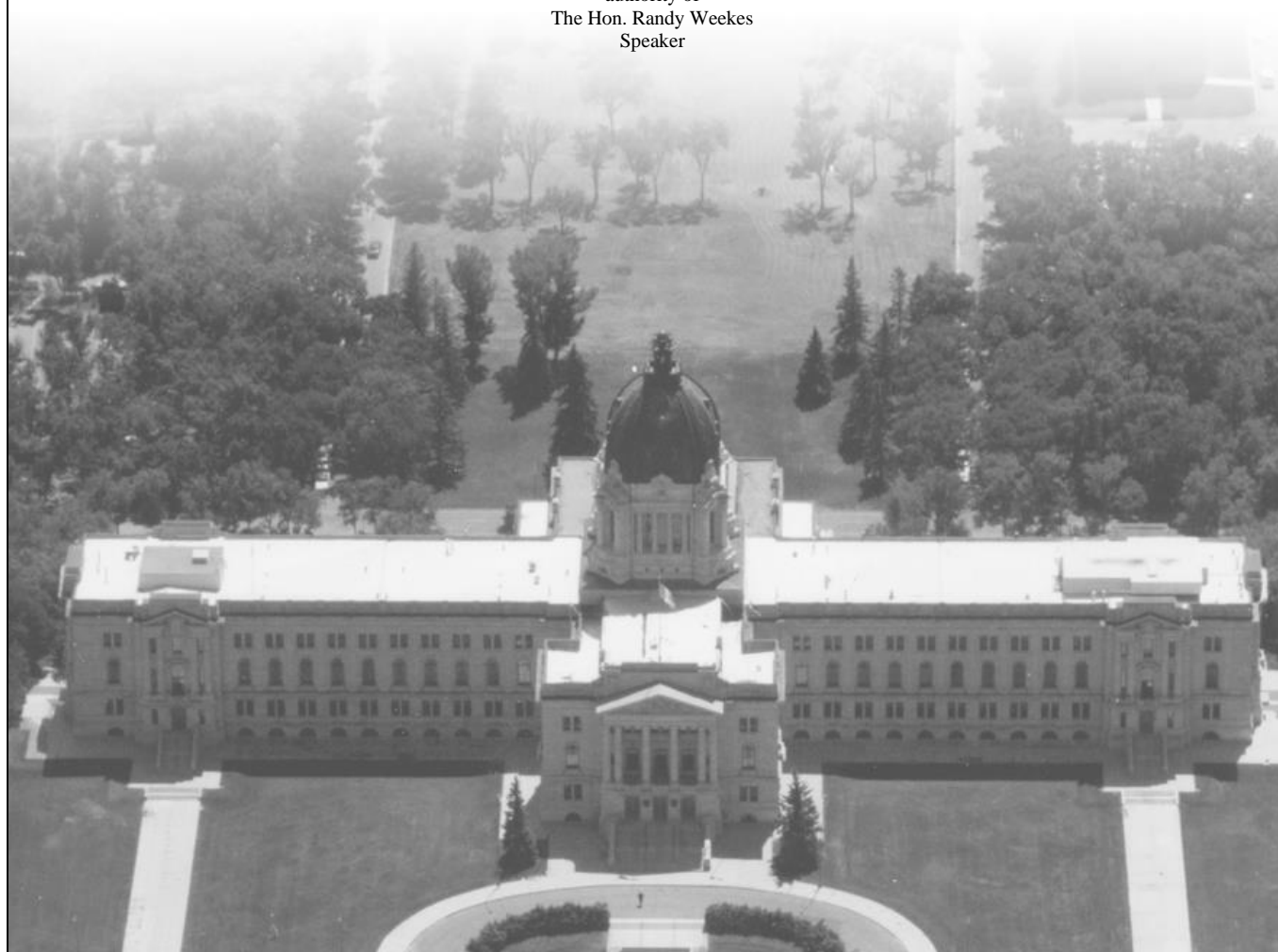
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**DEBATES  
AND  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Randy Weekes  
Speaker



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**3rd Session — 29th Legislature**

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

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

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

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**Standings**

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

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Iris Lang  
**Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel** — Kenneth S. Ring, K.C.  
**Deputy Clerk** — Kathy Burianyk  
**Principal Clerk** — Robert Park

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Lyall Frederiksen

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Legislative Assembly are available  
within hours after each sitting.

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

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request an extended introduction.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So to you and through you, I'd like to welcome some special guests to the Legislative Assembly today. Seated in the Speaker's gallery is artist Cheryl Ring, Elder Liz Settee from Prince Albert, creators of the Heart Spirits project. The Heart Spirits project saw the creation of 1,200 hearts, clay hearts, each honouring the life of missing and murdered Indigenous women and their families. Originating in Prince Albert, the project was recently displayed in the Minneapolis airport, reaching thousands of people daily and raising awareness of this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, last spring the member from Prince Albert Northcote introduced me to Cheryl and showed me her work. I've been following the project ever since, and I am so pleased to see her success. Elder Settee is a leader in her community, teaching students about traditional medicine and educating them on reconciliation. And I understand Elder Settee will often bless classrooms, offer smudges to anyone in need.

I want to thank Cheryl, the elder, for their leadership and their advocacy. Joining Cheryl and Elder Settee are Heather Morton and Stephen Ring. Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to welcome artist Cheryl Ring and Elder Liz and Heather and Stephen to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you very much.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members, I'd like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming Elder Liz, Cheryl, Heather, and Steve to this, their legislature, on behalf of the official opposition.

Thank you so much for the true commitment that you're bringing to reconciliation, to advocacy, as well as to the artistic endeavours and commitment that you're bringing not just to your community, but to the world. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these remarkable citizens of Saskatchewan to this, their legislature.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government

Relations.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce to you and the rest of the Assembly 26 grade 8 students from the Indian Head High School that are seated in the west gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers, Sandra Klatt and Jennifer Geis.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to meeting with them after and getting a picture and of course maybe answering some questions regarding question period. Hopefully it's a little tamer today than it was yesterday, Mr. Speaker. And I'm not sure what time they're heading back to Indian Head, but I'm probably going to be following the bus out as I've got a couple of meetings. I'm spending the afternoon in Indian Head myself. So I'd ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Well thank you very much. In the west gallery as well, there is another group of students from F.W. Johnson Collegiate. They are in grade 10. There's about 33 of them here this afternoon, fine looking crew. And well that's appropriate. They come from Fines Drive; that's where F.W. Johnson is in Regina here. Their teacher is Mr. McKillop. Great to see him again, and I look forward to having a meeting with them after question period. Please help me welcome them.

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to her Legislative Assembly, seated in your gallery, Erin Brady. As the new CEO [chief executive officer] of the Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency, Erin has an extensive experience working in the health sector, including the Saskatchewan health council and saskdocs. She will be the first CEO of the Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency, and her work with that agency will be focused on the coordination and collaboration of health human resources planning. We are looking forward to the great work that we know Erin will do within this role, Mr. Speaker.

Joining Erin is Tracey Smith, my deputy minister. I want to say thank you to Tracey for all of her advice and all of her wisdom over the years, and she's doing a great job as the deputy minister of Health. I'd like to welcome both of these individuals to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming Erin Brady to her legislature. On behalf of the official opposition, we know that this is a very important role within the province right now as we seek to recruit and retain as many health care workers as possible to bolster our system. I want to thank you for stepping up into that position, and you know, wish you all the best in the work ahead. And I would ask all members to join me in welcoming her to her Assembly today.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Riversdale.

**Mr. Friesen:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to you and through you and to all members, I'd like to introduce Brahmjot Sahani to his Legislative Assembly. Brahmjot works at the Ramada where I stay when I'm in Regina, and you know, he makes everyone there feel so welcome. He is among many titles, I believe he's a mixologist there. But more importantly, he has been teaching me some Punjabi language which has been really interesting. And just such a great guy. He's only been in Saskatchewan for nine months in Canada, and so I'm very proud to have you here today. And sat sri akal. I wish you all the best here today. I hope you enjoy yourself. And please join me in welcoming Brahmjot to his Legislative Assembly.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Jensen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm on my feet this morning to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. 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 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 budget officer's analysis, most households will pay more in fuel charges and GST [goods and services tax], as well as receiving slightly lower incomes than they receive in the climate action incentive payments; despite promises from the federal government that the tax would remain revenue neutral and that 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 action: to call upon the Government of Canada to immediately end the federal carbon tax and support Saskatchewan's development as a global supplier of food, fuel, and fertilizer.

The below undersigned are residents of Hudson Bay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Teed:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition to the Legislative Assembly calling for adequate and equitable SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] rates. The undersigned residents of the province would like to bring to our attention: that current SAID rates mean that individuals who rely on this program live well below the poverty line; that the provincial government has made cuts to many additional benefits formerly available under the program, such as the special diet benefits and rental supports; that the provincial government engages in clawback policies that have been found to be discriminatory, such as the policy of requiring individuals to apply for their early CPP [Canada Pension Plan] and then clawing it back dollar for dollar.

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: (1) increase SAID rates to account for inflation; (2) respect the constitutional rights of persons with disabilities in Saskatchewan by halting the discriminatory practices and aligning policies with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; (3) index SAID basic amount to inflation going forward; and (4) provide targeted relief to those in deepest poverty, such as single individuals paying market rent.

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

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

**Ms. Ritchie:** — I rise today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly on adequate funding for education. The undersigned residents wish to bring to your attention: that the education funding included in the '23-24 provincial budget is wholly inadequate and will lead to cuts in the classroom again; the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] who represent all 27 school divisions in a non-partisan way have criticized this budget, stating it further erodes education in our province; they note the increase in school division budget provides just 0.7 per cent for the '23-24 school year; teachers say they are baffled by this government's disregard for students; and STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] president, Samantha Becotte, says: "Government either doesn't understand the issues or doesn't think they are important." It is important to know that this year's failures come after nearly a decade of funding that fails to keep pace with inflation and enrolment, and for years school divisions describe a system that is already cut to the bone.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request and call on the government to provide adequate, sustainable, and predictable operating funds for our 27 school and public separate school divisions to ensure schools, teachers, and other caring professionals are able to meet the students . . .

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Heart Spirits Project on Display in Cumberland Gallery

**Ms. A. Ross:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May 5th is Red Dress Day, a national day of awareness for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and two-spirit people. Red Dress Day is held each year to raise awareness of the disproportionate number of Indigenous people who are impacted by gender-based violence.

An initiative in my constituency of Prince Albert Northcote is dedicated to raising awareness and support for missing and murdered Indigenous women and their families. Artist Cheryl Ring and Elder Liz Settee have joined us here today. Cheryl created the Heart Spirits project, the creation of 1,200 clay hearts, each honouring a missing or murdered Indigenous woman.

Cheryl says the hearts represent a real physical reminder of women and girls whose families' hearts have been broken. Cheryl has held workshops across the province inviting communities to craft hearts. Elder Liz Settee attends these workshops, smudging workplaces, and blessing each heart.

Mr. Speaker, in May we are lucky to have 200 of these hearts on display in the Legislative Building, Cumberland Gallery. We are grateful to create a space to honour and facilitate education on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to view the exhibit and thank artist Cheryl Ring and Elder Settee for their work and advocacy for missing and murdered Indigenous women in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

### Red Dress Day

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take a moment to recognize the significance of May 5th, Red Dress Day, a day of remembrance for the countless Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people who have gone missing or have been murdered in Canada. It's a sombre day, a day that calls upon us to sit with the deep pain and trauma that Indigenous communities have endured and continue to endure.

As we wear red to honour the lives of those who've been taken, we must also commit to doing better in our efforts to address systemic violence and injustice faced by Indigenous peoples. It's not just words, Mr. Speaker, and I remind the government of the actions they committed to last year in front of hundreds of Indigenous women, girls, and families who have lost loved ones.

In Saskatchewan we have a long and painful history with violence against Indigenous women. They continue to account for an unforgivably high number of missing and murdered people in this province, and we must recognize the disproportionate violence and discrimination faced by Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people is a result of colonialism, racism, and patriarchy.

We must centre the voices and experiences of Indigenous communities in our efforts to create meaningful change. And on this Red Dress Day let us honour the memory of those who have been lost and commit to working towards a future where all Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people are valued, respected, and safe.

[10:15]

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

### New Urgent Care Centre in Saskatoon

**Mr. Friesen:** — Last Friday was another great day in Riversdale, Mr. Speaker. My colleague from Churchill-Wildwood and I joined the Minister of Health and were co-MCs [master of ceremonies] making the urgent care centre site announcement.

The Government of Saskatchewan jointly announced with Ahtahkakoop Cree Developments that the Saskatoon urgent care centre will be built in the Pleasant Hill School site location. The Pleasant Hill site is just blocks away from St. Paul's Hospital, which was an important factor in determining the location.

Elder Ray Ahenakew spoke about the way to tie the history of the building to the new design, Mr. Speaker. With our government's commitment to improving access to quality health care and easing pressures on hospital emergency departments, we believe this decision will provide tremendous benefit for Saskatoon residents. The facility will offer patients 24-hour alternative to emergency departments for illness and injuries that are non-life-threatening but do need urgent attention. This also includes mental health supports, Mr. Speaker. The facility will be built and owned by Ahtahkakoop Cree Developments and leased to the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] to deliver the health services.

Our government is very proud of our partnership with Ahtahkakoop Cree Developments, a first-of-its-kind agreement. I was very fortunate to be part of this event, and as a resident of Riversdale I'm looking forward to seeing this project.

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

### International Wishbone Day

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, May 6th is Wishbone Day, an international day of awareness for osteogenesis imperfecta. OI is caused by a genetic disorder that affects a body's production of collagen, a molecule which gives bones their strength. As a result, the bones of people with OI fracture far more easily than those of people without the condition. It's also known as brittle bone disease.

There are 19 types of OI and the experiences of people with the condition vary. Someone with type 1, the mildest type of OI, will experience bone fractures but not the more severe symptoms of other types, whereas type 2, the most severe type, almost always causes intrauterine fractures and perinatal mortality.

Further to the physical challenges, people with OI often face the social challenges of living with a disability. These include feelings of isolation, mental health struggles, difficulty finding employment, and the increased risk of living in poverty. It's essential that we protect and expand our public health care system so that people with OI can be assured that they will have access to the care they need. And we must do more to reduce the social challenges faced by people living with disabilities.

I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in wearing yellow on May 6th to celebrate the unbreakable spirits of people living with osteogenesis imperfecta. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### New Fire Station in Regina

**Mr. Grewal:** — Mr. Speaker, today is International Firefighters' Day, and for firefighters in Regina, there's an extra piece of good news. A new fire station is being constructed to serve east

Regina. The future location of Fire Station No. 8 will be at the corner of Chuka Boulevard and Primrose Green Drive. Quick access to Victoria Avenue East was one of the reasons Regina and protective services chose this location.

In addition to providing emergency response, a fire station is a community hub in a lot of ways. Through fire station tours and other events that welcome citizens into the station, fire safety programming, and community partnerships that strengthen our services, the RFPS [Regina Fire & Protective Services] works to benefit the communities.

The current timeline for the project is planning development and resourcing in 2023-2024; construction in '25; and finally, for Fire Station No. 8, official opening in '26.

Until the new Fire Station No. 8 is operational, RFPS will continue to mitigate risk in the community through multiple programs, such as traffic signal pre-emption, which allows a fire truck to change traffic lights in a way that clears traffic in their path to allow a quicker response.

The last fire station built in Regina was Fire Station No. 4 on Dewdney Avenue in 2010, which replaced an aging station that was decommissioned with the opening of the new one. Thank you to all the firefighters across the province for keeping people safe and protecting property. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **University of Saskatchewan Launches Fundraising Campaign**

**Ms. Lambert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Minister of Advanced Education and I attended the launch of the University of Saskatchewan's Be What the World Needs fundraising campaign.

Mr. Speaker, the campaign has an ambitious goal of \$500 million. More than 500 folks were present at the launch that was held at Saskatoon's Merlis Belsher Place. It was encouraging to see such community support. It was even more encouraging to learn at the launch that nearly 65 per cent of the campaign goal has been raised. More than \$322 million has already been committed.

The university has big plans for the campaign funds that include leading critical research, supporting Indigenous achievement, inspiring student success, and designing visionary new spaces on their campuses. Through the generous support of campaign donors, 10 new research Chair positions have been established, including the only research Chair in Métis governance and policy. And 84 million will go to student scholarships and financial aid.

Mr. Speaker, this is the largest fundraising initiative in USask [University of Saskatchewan] history and in the history of province. USask has a vision to be the university that the world needs by investing in research, people, projects, and places. This campaign is another step in USask's remarkable journey to put Saskatchewan's expertise and innovative minds to work on the world stage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

#### **Opposition Statements on Pipelines**

**Ms. C. Young:** — Mr. Speaker, the NDP leader seemed quite offended and surprised to learn her party opposes pipelines. Let me refresh her memory.

When this Assembly voted on a motion to support the Keystone XL pipeline, the NDP opposition, including the member for Rosemont, voted against it. When this Assembly voted on a motion to support the Northern Gateway pipeline, the NDP opposition voted against it.

The member for Elphinstone-Centre said that "Any political agenda that takes climate change seriously doesn't have space for the KM Trans Mountain Expansion." The member for Nutana said, "Instead of pipelines, we should be building an east-west electricity grid." In a scrum last fall, the member for Douglas Park was asked five times if she supports pipelines, and she wouldn't give an answer.

And even the NDP leader herself said her party supports federally approved pipeline projects, in other words, projects approved by her federal leader. And how many pipeline projects has Jagmeet Singh ever supported? None, Mr. Speaker, none.

Mr. Speaker, it's a perfect record. The NDP never met a pipeline project they didn't oppose. I don't know why they get so upset when we point that out.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Health Care Staffing and Facility Information**

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing to deliver on health care. Yesterday we released a leaked document that showed that four ICUs [intensive care unit] were on bypass, not taking any new patients. It's not acceptable. Saskatchewan people should be able to get the care that they need when and where they need it.

To the Premier: does he think that it's acceptable to have four ICUs all turning away critically ill patients on the same day?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, most certainly as I said yesterday, the challenges that we are seeing in health care, Mr. Speaker — which amount to us needing to bring more people to the front lines of health care, including in our ICU department — are not exclusively Saskatchewan challenges. They're challenges across the nation. They're challenges that we're working collectively with the federal government, with other provinces, and with our health care teams across this province, Mr. Speaker.

That's why, if the opposition has been paying attention over the last while, they would note that we have in place the most ambitious health human resource plan in the nation. They would note that we have committed to . . .



[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, if the opposition was paying attention, they would also note that there has been a commitment to this government funded in this most recent budget to increase, to increase, the ICU capacity in this province, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the things that we have learned, the Saskatchewan Health Authority has advised us on as we exited a pandemic, is we do need more intensive care capacity, Mr. Speaker.

We've committed to that. It's funded in this budget, Mr. Speaker. And we are currently, through the most ambitious health human resource plan in the nation, finding people to come in and offer those services.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, so it's clear for the Premier, this isn't just an issue in the big cities. This is impacting and causing huge challenges for people living in rural communities as well.

One Canora resident shared with me that the hospital in their community was closed a total of 12 days in March. Mr. Speaker, that's almost every second day. And when this happens, people have to drive out of their community to get the care that they desperately need and should be able to get at home.

Does the minister, does the Premier think that it's acceptable for hospitals like Canora to be closed for half of the month because there aren't enough staff? And why, why are they failing so badly when it comes to rural hospitals?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I stood up a little early and the House Leader was concerned that I was going to walk out the door, Mr. Speaker, but I most certainly am not today.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to Canora, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health just informed me and thankfully through that very ambitious health human resource plan — which will be further emboldened, Mr. Speaker, with the recruitment agency, the recruitment agency up and running with a CEO introduced here today, Mr. Speaker — that we have two SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment] docs that are arriving in that community here in July, Mr. Speaker. They will join the team, the health care team that is offering services there today.

But there's one thing we commit to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. We are going to do everything we can within that health human resource plan, within our recruitment agency, within the broader Saskatchewan Health Authority to attract, hire, retain, recruit those folks to offer those services to Saskatchewan people.

What we are not going to do, Mr. Speaker, is what the members opposite did when they had the opportunity, and it's to remove those services from mostly rural communities, Mr. Speaker. The only one not in a rural community was the Plains Hospital here in Regina.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier might want to think, rethink those tired and outdated lines. I've got a quote for him: "They need to point to something other than, well the NDP closed 52 hospitals. That's an old talking point and quite honestly, I'm tired of it." You know who said that, Mr. Speaker? Nancy Heppner.

Now, Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister said in the rotunda that he'd look at making the hospital dashboard in Regina available. Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough. It's 2023 — you can track a pizza or an Amazon parcel all the way to your front door. There's no reason why people shouldn't be able to access this basic information about their hospitals. The minister does not need to keep it under lock and key. When will the minister ensure that everyone in Saskatchewan, no matter where they live, has access to this important information?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, those documents, they are in place, posted, in the case of Saskatoon. And the Saskatchewan Health Authority is working on doing the very same here in Regina, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to the outcomes of what the health human resource plan is achieving here in the province, Mr. Speaker, in addition to the physicians that are being recruited here — two of them to the community of Canora — we have in this province today about 18,000, we have about 18,000 nurses that are providing service in community after community across this province. That's 547 more nurses, Mr. Speaker, in 2022 relative to 2021, so there are nurses, additional nurses that are coming to provide that assistance and relief to those that are already there, Mr. Speaker.

And I would just say this: that's about 5,000 more nurses than when the NDP had the opportunity to form government, Mr. Speaker. With 1,000 more physicians; 5,000 more nurses, Mr. Speaker; hundreds of more CCAs, [continuing care aide] helping, offering that service, Mr. Speaker, making that service as secure as possible in community after community across this province.

Our commitment to the people of Saskatchewan is that we are going to offer that service long into the future because their community is growing, Mr. Speaker, because of prosperous and growing economy that we have here, Mr. Speaker, and their community most certainly has the support of the provincial government.

[10:30]

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, those lines weren't working yesterday, and they're not working today either. This tired and out-of-touch government has no interest in transparency. They give Saskatchewan people and health care workers as little information as possible when it comes to our health care system.

The government knows which facilities are closed and which facilities are on bypass, but they won't share that information with Saskatchewan people. Why won't the Minister of Health put the information for all our facilities up on the SHA website?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I identified yesterday, Mr. Speaker, this is hidden on the internet, and I'll read it out on the record, Mr. Speaker: [www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/news/documents/capacity](http://www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/news/documents/capacity).

Mr. Speaker, this is where it is. It's hidden on the internet, Mr. Speaker, for the people of Saskatoon to be able to find out what the capacity is in our hospitals. We are working on expanding that for Regina. I have asked the SHA to look into operationalizing a website where people can check to make sure.

But just to address some of the comments that were made before about our ICU capacity. Mr. Speaker, we have increased our ICU capacity from 79 to 85, which they voted against. We also brought in 10 high-acuity beds, Mr. Speaker, in Regina just over at the General, to match the ones up in Saskatoon — again, that they vote against.

I wish they would recognize some of the hard work that the people in the SHA and the ministry are doing to address some of the issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, correction: people are finding out their facilities are closed by checking on Facebook, Mr. Speaker. There's no reason to keep the information from the leaked ICU dashboard away from Saskatchewan people. The government should want people to know as much as possible about our health care system and what is truly going on.

Four ICUs on bypass, all at the same time, is completely unacceptable, and that minister knows that that information is not available anywhere on the depths of the internet. We would not have known about this had we not received this leaked ICU dashboard, Mr. Speaker.

Why doesn't this minister understand basic transparency? It's all about spin. Why won't he ensure Saskatchewan people get the full story when it comes to the state of our hospitals?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report to the House that our ICU capacity on average in the last 30 days has been 79 per cent, and I thank the good people that are working in our health care system to be able to manage that.

Mr. Speaker, as I've identified, there are peaks that we have within our system, Mr. Speaker. They are talking about a snapshot in time, Mr. Speaker. What I am talking about is the overall capacity. What I'm talking about is the overall capacity within our system, that we have increased in our ICU capacity as well as our acute care beds, Mr. Speaker.

We have the record on this side of the House of building hospitals and creating space, Mr. Speaker. They have the record . . . And I know they don't like this, Mr. Speaker. They have the record of closing 52 hospitals in our province, Mr. Speaker. They need to own the record, and they also need to be proud of the health care workers that are out there working on our behalf. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Funding for Education

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This tired and out-of-touch government is totally failing on health care. They are also failing when it comes to our kids and our classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, the Education minister is giving qualified independent schools a 25 per cent increase, but he's only giving publicly funded schools a 0.7 per cent increase. And that is forcing boards to make cuts. We've asked this tired and out-of-touch minister this question before, but we've failed to get an answer here on the floor of the Assembly. So I'll ask again: what cuts or fee hikes does the minister think school divisions should bring in to make up for his underfunding of our kids' classrooms?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would just again clarify for the members opposite, in terms of the independent schools, Mr. Speaker. Independent schools are funded based on two factors: one is the 50 per cent of the public average, in terms of what the per-student average is; and enrolment, Mr. Speaker. So when more families choose, for whatever reason, an independent choice, Mr. Speaker, that increases the enrolment, and then we times that by 50 per cent of whatever the provincial average is for that given year, Mr. Speaker.

So I would ask the members opposite, are they not in favour of independent choices for families to be able to make, Mr. Speaker? Is that the position of the members opposite, that they wouldn't provide those options and that they wouldn't provide that funding?

Would we go back to a time that we had, that existed under the NDP prior to 2012, where there really was no regulations? Certainly there was no funding, but there was no regulations, Mr. Speaker, and we saw what happened there, Mr. Speaker. We're working hard to ensure that there's choice for parents, Mr. Speaker, and providing funding for all students.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Providing funding for all students, Mr. Speaker? News flash: if your funding isn't keeping pace with inflation and growth, you're not providing funding for all students. You're providing cuts.

And this tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government is forcing our school divisions to make cuts. Teachers in Regina Public

Schools just received a letter, and it says that cuts to programs and new fees for parents are all on the table, at a time when families can least afford it.

And what are their options? What's being considered? I'll quote:

Examining fees for noon supervision; reducing spending on technology, learning resources and facilities; facility projects; striving to minimize transportation costs; reducing positions in division office that support the delivery of education programs and services; reducing noon-hour staff allocations; and reducing instructional positions in schools that will increase staff-to-student ratios.

So that's a long list, Mr. Speaker. Which of those cut or fee increases does the minister think is best?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Regina Public School Division is going to receive a 2.6 per cent budget-to-budget increase. That's \$6.3 million, Mr. Speaker. And keep in mind that's to cover the 50 per cent of operational costs that are not teacher salary because we do not have a contract in place post-August when this current contract ends. Mr. Speaker, we would be funding that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's also opportunity in terms of the savings that will be provided because of the way that we're funding distance learning now, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are millions of dollars within the public divisions that will be saved.

But I would just say this, Mr. Speaker, after the second quarter, public school divisions reported to the Ministry of Education a \$46 million surplus. Quite a few dimes, in the words of that member opposite, quite a few dimes to rub together.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — And, Mr. Speaker, the minister barely has the confidence to read his own speaking notes. Is he going to go out there and say that to teachers and parents and school board trustees? No, he's not.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon Public has already said cuts will be required to balance their budget, and Regina Public has left those options on the tables. There are 25 other publicly funded school divisions looking at how they can manage this minister's cuts to their budgets. None of this makes any sense.

This tired and out-of-touch government is sitting on windfall revenues, but now they're forcing cuts. You have the money; fund education, Mr. Speaker. How do these cuts and fee hikes help families and help students learn in our schools? How, Mr. Speaker, is this growth that works for everyone?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will know that we have the highest per capita funding in education all across the provinces, Mr. Speaker. That is supported by the taxpayers of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite raised Saskatoon Public School Division. And I know they don't want to understand this, but I'll try to, as quickly as I can in 50 seconds, explain this. Mr. Speaker, according to Saskatoon Public School Division, they have dedicated 49 teaching positions at a cost of \$5.055 million for online learning. Mr. Speaker, that is an expense that they will no longer have, but they retain the funding for those students. If they have 5,000 courses taken by part-time students, that will cost them \$2.5 million, Mr. Speaker, which means they will have \$2.5 million to redeploy any way they want in the school system. And that is the case for every single public school division, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Establishment of a Provincial Revenue Agency**

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — What an arrogant dismissal of the reality that school boards and students and Regina Public know all too well, Mr. Speaker.

But that tired and out-of-touch government have really lost their way, Mr. Speaker. Instead of being laser focused on the things that matter — like health care, like education, like the cost of living — they're focused on a costly new revenue agency that this government is planning to spend \$10 million more each and every year to hire tax collectors and tax experts, not to include the start-up costs. Something that CRA [Canada Revenue Agency] already does for no cost to the province of Saskatchewan.

Despite this, that tired and out-of-touch government is bringing that bill forward next week to committee. Why won't that minister scrap this costly vanity project today, before they waste any more of the hard-earned money of Saskatchewan people?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite has some of his facts a little . . . what do I say? Skewed, distorted. Or perhaps he just isn't aware. And so I'm more than happy to help him out.

We actually do pay the CRA for every change that we want to make to the basic structure of the corporate income tax. So therefore, every time we introduce a tax incentive to attract investment to our province, we have to pay the Canada Revenue Agency to make that change. As well, for any interest or penalty collection that the Canada Revenue Agency does, they retain that money — it doesn't come back to the province, even though it may be the province's taxpayer.

So the member opposite, you know, may not know that, so I'm more than happy to help him out.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Arrogance, Mr. Speaker. This is a costly waste of government resources and attention when they should be laser focused on the things that matter: health care, education, and the cost of living. Instead they're ramming ahead with a plan

that will spend \$10 million more each and every year for this agency and will create an additional burden for businesses — \$16 million more each and every year for Saskatchewan businesses.

Now weeks ago we all were at the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce forum where they raised this concern and their opposition to this plan with all of us. What does that tired and out-of-touch government say to Saskatchewan businesses that are opposed to this wasteful plan that will cost them millions more?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — I'm glad the member opposite is acknowledging that I am meeting with those business organizations and listening to what they have to say. We've had some very, very good dialogue. You know, I've answered to their concerns. I've given the rationale.

One of them is that we can . . . The CRA doesn't always agree to changes that we want to make that would help our businesses here in our province, our industries. And one such incident was the changes we wanted to make to their changes for the passive income which made it more difficult for female entrepreneurs, in order to retain their passive income, to keep their business open while they took a mat leave. You would think that that would be something those members opposite would be engaged and supportive of. But no, they don't even want to entertain it.

For the next question I have something else I want to ask the member opposite.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, of course we can make those changes in the current arrangement.

You know, that tired and out-of-touch government just isn't listening any more, Mr. Speaker. They're not listening to the thousands of people that showed up on Saturday to fight for education. They're not listening to the health care workers and communities about the crisis in our hospitals and so many that are in bypass, Mr. Speaker. They're certainly not listening to the groups like the chambers of commerce who are coming out opposed to this minister's costly virtue-signalling exercise.

Why won't the minister scrap this plan before any more time and money is wasted and before businesses are forced to pay millions more for a less effective, more complex tax system that will have them filing their taxes twice?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that he can't get anyone from the business community to come and publicly say what he just stated there. So that is rather interesting.

There is concerns for sure. We want an explanation. He is bringing to the floor a debate on something that actually isn't in this budget. It's an initiative that's going to be over a few years. And he's tagged numbers to it, Mr. Speaker. I'd love to know

where those numbers came from because there is no 10 million in this budget in order to fund this.

[10:45]

And so this is very interesting. And he's shouting "Alberta" across the floor. We are in consultation with Alberta and finding out what the costs are, what the IT [information technology] is necessary, and what their taxpayers feel about it. And they've had it in place for 40 years, Mr. Speaker — for 40 years — and they're not reversing it at this point.

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

### Support for Students and Parents in the Education System

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's education system has been failing students for years now, with increased mental health issues and declining academic scores. During the pandemic, this trend was made even worse. According to reports published by the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit, during the pandemic 38 per cent of their students said their overall mental health was worse, 34 per cent of the students said they needed mental health assistance, and more than a third said they never got any. One in ten children reported an increase in self-harm. One in five students had suicidal ideation.

Mr. Speaker, these tragic and disturbing statistics are the lived experience of Saskatchewan students. Mr. Speaker, excuses for past situations are not good enough today. What is this government doing today — today — to address this created mental health crisis?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We certainly are doing a lot within the education system. It's one of the four pillars of the new education plan that will take us out to 2030, Mr. Speaker. We're partnering with the Ministry of Health in terms of an integrated youth strategy, Mr. Speaker. I'd be happy to go into more detail in terms of what that will look like.

But I'll say this as the member noted the pandemic, Mr. Speaker. That is why this government fought so hard to ensure that students would not be penalized based on vaccination status, Mr. Speaker, despite the calls from the members opposite, despite the calls from the teachers' union, Mr. Speaker. That is why this government stood firm when we said that students would not be penalized during the pandemic, Mr. Speaker. And that's something that those members opposite, I know, want to change the history on, Mr. Speaker, to revise the history, but that certainly was the position of this government.

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

**Ms. Wilson:** — Mr. Speaker, these students are suffering, and perhaps the government should feel uncomfortable.

On Saturday I was pleased to attend the protest that represented the interests of teachers, parents, and students. And also on this

past Saturday, it was also a privilege to take part in People Before Politics Conference here in Regina, where I heard from hundreds of concerned and upset parents on the state of our education, Mr. Speaker. They feel they are not properly consulted, they are not listened to, they're not respected, and they are continually being marginalized out of their children's education.

Mr. Speaker, I feel this government does not respect the family values or the roles of parents and guardians. Mr. Speaker, what is this government going to do to address this ever-growing concern raised by Saskatchewan parents?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Well certainly, Mr. Speaker, certainly we do listen to the voice of parents in terms of what they want for their children's education. That's why, despite the calls from the members opposite, this government is supportive of parents having the choice when it comes to independent schools and providing 50 per cent funding for those independent schools, Mr. Speaker.

That's why this government has moved on something like province-wide distance learning, Mr. Speaker, because we heard from parents that didn't like the fact that their children were being left out of extracurricular activities, didn't like that their children were being left out of graduation, didn't like that their children were being left out of options when it came to course selection, Mr. Speaker.

That's why we're moving on those areas, because we are listening to parents, Mr. Speaker. And we are moving forward with change in the education system to give an educational experience to students, Mr. Speaker, that is the best across the entire country.

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Point of order.

**The Speaker:** — State your point of order.

#### POINT OF ORDER

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

During question period, the member for Regina University yelled across the floor, don't trust what Scott's saying. Clearly, on two different provisions, that's out of order. We would ask the member to withdraw and apologize.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition Deputy Leader.

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, I was listening very intently throughout question period. I didn't hear anything of the sort. I would ask that you review and delay your ruling on this.

**The Speaker:** — We will review the record and get back.

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

#### Standing Committee on Human Services

**Mr. Jenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 129, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2023* without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole and that the bill be read a third time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in the Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 129, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2023* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

#### THIRD READINGS

**Bill No. 129 — *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2023***

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — Third reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — Third reading.

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

#### Standing Committee on Human Services

**Mr. Jenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 103, *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act* without amendment.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 103, *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 103 — *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act*

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

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. Order. Order. Order.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — Third reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — Third reading.

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

#### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 130, *The Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation Act* without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in the Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

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

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 130, *The Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation Act* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 130 — *The Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation Act*

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

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — Third reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — Third reading.

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

#### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 131, *The Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation Consequential Amendments Act, 2023* without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

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

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 131, *The Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation Consequential Amendments Act, 2023* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### THIRD READINGS

**Bill No. 131 — *The Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation Consequential Amendments Act, 2023/Loi de 2023 portant modification corrélative de la loi intitulée The Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation Act***

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

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — Third reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — Third reading.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

#### Federal Carbon Tax and Affordability

**Mr. Friesen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as always it's my pleasure to rise and enter debate today. At the end of my comments, I am going to move a motion, and I will bring that one up later. This is something that I'm certainly happy we're able to talk about.

And you know, the member from Regina Rosemont speaks in this House numerous times — sometimes just chirping from his seat — how they're in favour of getting rid of the carbon tax. But you know, Mr. Speaker, do they ever go in front of the camera? Does the member from Rosemont go in front of the camera? Does he ever speak outside of this House?

He can sure play a really good game in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, but I haven't seen him, I haven't seen him on Facebook, I haven't seen him on Twitter, on Instagram condemning the carbon tax. And you know, it's kind of sad because they can say one thing in here, but yet when they go out they can't actually say it out in the public. They can't be on the media with it. And you know, it would be nice if any one of them stood up on media or social media, any one of them, outside of this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and actually condemn the carbon tax.

But oh, wait a minute, wait, wait. One did actually speak publicly

about the carbon tax, Mr. Speaker. The member from Saskatoon Nutana did, and she said this, and I quote, "We don't think of carbon tax as a tax. This is a price on pollution and a necessary one."

So maybe, Mr. Speaker, we actually do know where they sit on the carbon tax and . . . They sure like talking from their seat, Mr. Speaker. It would be nice to see them speak in public, and speak . . .

[Interjections]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. Let's have a little respect across the floor, please.

**Mr. Friesen:** — It would be nice to see them speak in public with this, Mr. Speaker, and even on their social media posts. Well we've got one that's out there. We know how they feel. They are supporting their leader Jagmeet Singh and propping up the Trudeau government to support the carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, what is this carbon tax doing to us? Unbelievable ramifications for our residents of this province, Mr. Speaker. And you know, I find it interesting as well that the one thing they bring up over and over again is affordability and how we're in an affordability crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I totally agree. Things have gone up exponentially. I was just at the grocery store the other day looking at, buying some groceries, and it's astounding what they've gone up. But if we think of how even these groceries get there. The input tax on the farm when they seed, there's a massive energy cost. Their carbon tax is a ridiculous amount of that bill — I'm going to get to that later — but that's just on seeding the crop, Mr. Speaker. Then there's taking the crop off when they harvest. There's a carbon tax on that again.

The Minister of Agriculture pointed this out so well, and I'm kind of copying a little bit of his notes, Mr. Speaker. But when they're harvesting the crop, when they're hauling the crop, there's carbon tax on the fuel used to haul that crop. There's carbon tax used to process the crop, and carbon tax not only on the natural gas that they use, not only on the power, but also on the fuel that they use.

[11:00]

And then again, we can keep going with this because we're not even there yet. There's carbon tax to actually now haul that finished product to the grocery store. And there's carbon tax on the energy just to keep the grocery store with lights on and heat. So this goes on and on. And then if we were to drive, as residents of this province, to the grocery store to buy groceries, I have to pay carbon tax again on the fuel that I'm using in my vehicle, Mr. Speaker.

So that's another thing, affordability issue that they've talked about, is the price of our fuel. And there's carbon tax on the fuel, Mr. Speaker. And there's GST on the carbon tax that's on the fuel, which is really quite ironic. But I mean, it just hits us from every angle. And so as far as the cost of living and affordability crisis, this is one of the biggest things. And if they actually would go out there, send a letter to their leader — Jagmeet Singh, their

federal leader — get involved, actually get a protest going on this carbon tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Because you know, this even goes into . . . I talked a little bit about the farmers. But you know, what is the point of this tax? When this first came out, I was thinking, what is the point of this tax? What are we actually doing with this tax? Are we incentivizing our provinces or different communities in the country to actually lower their carbon footprint? No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, no. We're just taking this tax and sending some of it back to people apparently, which is not even a net zero at all. People are still facing those challenges with the cost of living.

And with our affordability, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our Deputy Premier and Finance minister has worked very hard on this over the years, and there's over \$2.1 billion of relief annually, taking over 112,000 people off the provincial tax rolls. So you want to talk about affordability over there, talk about what we're doing. Get rid of the carbon tax and support our budget, which actually is supporting people year on year.

Did we do temporary measures? Absolutely. We had a \$500 affordability cheque. We did that out last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There was also, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] had three rebates throughout the last year. So we are actually working on affordability challenge. They can be. The NDP opposite can be working on it. And if they were and if they really wanted to work on it, they would challenge their federal leader, who's propping up Trudeau, and cancel this carbon tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So we want to talk about what a carbon tax does and what the point of a carbon tax should be. I would think that a point of a carbon tax should be to reduce your carbon footprint. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd argue that this province is innovative in lowering our carbon footprint. We've been doing this since the '60s, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This is something we do take great pride in, our climate, our environment. This is why this side of the House — I will speak for us because I don't speak for the NDP opposition — but this is why I joined politics. This is why a lot of my colleagues joined politics, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we want a sustainable environment, a business-friendly environment, and an environment that works for the people that ultimately put us in these chairs. And we will continue to work for those people that put us here.

And part of that is, you know, talking about what this province does. And our zero-till started, I believe, in the late '60s. Some of our farmers can help us. Is that the late '60s?

**An Hon. Member:** — No, early '70s.

**Mr. Friesen:** — Early '70s? Okay. I'm off by one or two years. We'll see. Somewhere around where I was born. Anyways the zero-till is just one of the things that we have done.

And also, yeah, so it brings our . . . I was looking at the . . . I had some farm notes. I had to talk to some of the farmers here because I'm not a farmer, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But some of the things we do in farming are so innovative. The carbon footprint for canola is 60 per cent lower than our global competitors — 60 per cent

lower, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Durum wheat is 65 per cent lower than our global competitors. Okay, dry peas, get this one. I've read this and I just couldn't believe it. I've heard our Premier say it before, but 90 per cent lower carbon footprint than our global competitors — 90 per cent less.

So some of the things we're doing in this province are absolutely addressing what I think a carbon tax possibly was going after, but they really aren't hitting the mark with that one, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Another thing we do is carbon capture, utilization, and storage. And this, I could talk for 15 minutes on what happens with this because it's an amazing thing that's happening in the province. And our oil and gas, if people produced it like we do in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they could drop the emissions by 25 per cent overnight. Incredible what our workers do in this province.

And I want to thank all the people in our province, all the workers, all the farmers that have been working so hard for what it is, 50-plus years now, trying to make this province more sustainable and trying to make this environment better for their kids, for our kids, for our grandkids. So I want to thank them for that. And our oil workers, and all our workers that are in the industry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they've tried very hard to work in a good way and also in an environmentally friendly way.

I didn't even get into . . . and I see where my time's going. But the clean fuel standard was something I just wanted to touch on. And I suppose that the opposition could do something for us as well on that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they could actually get their federal leaders and their federal counterparts to support Bill 234. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the clean fuel oil standard — this is some numbers that have to be read in here — can add additional cost to farmers that would range from 54 to \$176 million. This is in addition to the carbon tax. They want to talk about sustainable future. You want to talk about affordability. This is not working. This is not working at all.

We talk about education. Education comes up in this House regularly in the last few days. You know, I found this stat just amazing, the estimated cost of carbon tax for energy for our school divisions. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 2019-2020, you know, the number wasn't too bad; it was only \$3 million. Now it's an estimated, '23-24, over \$11 million to our school divisions — over \$11 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But where are they? Can they get out and speak publicly against the carbon tax? Where are they? I don't hear them. No, in fact they get out and speak in favour of it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They get out and speak in favour of it. Lots of opportunities to be on the media. That's one chance you guys should take, is to get on the media with that.

One of my good friends, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is in the ag industry, and you know, he showed me some of his gas bills and it was astounding. One month, of the company that he works for, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one month was over \$48,000 of carbon tax. And that's before the increase in April. Like it almost becomes unsustainable. Where does that go through? That money processes and comes right through into our groceries, into our fuel. Over and over again we pay it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.



The cost of power. We talk about renewable energy. We talk about a lot of things. You know, SaskPower's been working on some great initiatives. They've got some renewable energies that are working right now. But you know, the real way we need to go with that — we're going to have to get there at some point to get cleaner energy — is nuclear.

Now affordability and green, you know, they never actually talk about the two together because they really don't mix. Because if you want that green energy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not affordable. And it could be four or five times what we pay for power right now.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I missed a whole bunch of points that I wanted to talk about, but I do have to get to the end of my comments. So in closing, I'm going to say that we will remain positive on this side of the House. And as the opposition calls us, we are actually toxically positive.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to move the following motion:

That this House condemns the April 1st carbon tax increase that is continuing to make life less affordable for Saskatchewan residents, businesses, families while directly targeting those who can least afford it; and

That this House further condemns the federal Environment minister's theoretical social cost of carbon emissions.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Moved by the member from Riversdale:

That this House condemns the April 1st carbon tax increase that is continuing to make life less affordable for Saskatchewan residents, businesses, and families while directly targeting those who can least afford it; and

That the House further condemns the federal Environment minister's theoretical social cost of carbon emission.

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

**Mr. Teed:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Happy to join in this debate today. Happy to debate carbon taxes for the, I think, the fourth time. I've lost count at this point during this session. I was actually really worried we would go a day in this House without talking about carbon taxes, but it's obvious that the well of this government's policy and ideas is getting pretty shallow.

That being said, there's not often a lot we agree on in this House, but on this one I think we can. We appreciate the government giving us yet another opportunity to reiterate this stance. Free air time, one might say. Those of us on this side of the House are happy to reaffirm our position, as we have many times — make sure to get the fuzz out of your ears in the back — that the Saskatchewan NDP does not support the federal government's carbon tax. Period.

Our leader, the member from Regina Lakeview, the Leader of the Official Opposition in this House and the Leader of the

Saskatchewan NDP, the original NDP I might add, has been crystal clear on this. She has been clear about our party's stance on the carbon tax. The Saskatchewan NDP does not support the carbon tax. And she has been clear in this House and in the media, condemning the April 1st carbon tax increase, which is continuing to make life more expensive for families and small businesses. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan NDP will fight every day to ensure a good deal for Saskatchewan people, like we always have.

In fact one only has to look at yesterday's question period where our leader and this party were the only ones standing up for Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan workers, Saskatchewan industries, and specifically Saskatchewan steel and steel production. We were the only ones talking about getting our resources to market, and our leader laid a smackdown on this government's smug and out-of-touch Minister of Trade and Export Development who couldn't even answer a question and say he supported steelworkers and steel production right here in Regina.

And when pressed, asked why his government wasn't supporting Saskatchewan steel, the minister spun a classic, fantastical narrative of blaming the Saskatchewan NDP for all of his government's failures, and then he blamed the federal government just for good measure. Mr. Speaker, she hit his fanciful spin about our stance on pipelines right out of the park. Saskatchewan New Democrats secured those resource rights, and we support getting those resources to the markets that need them. End of story.

And I think this government should take a long look in the mirror, a hard look, because in 16 years, even with their friends, conservative friends in Alberta and their conservative friends in British Columbia and their conservative friends in Ottawa, could not build a single pipeline. A big, fat zero amount of pipelines from this government.

Is that crystal clear enough for the members from Lloydminster and Martensville-Warman? Crystal clear? They've been selling out Regina's steel production to everybody else and they couldn't even answer a simple question: when they will support steel production here in Regina. It's quite a telling story about this government's priorities. And they're heckling me that it's all Jagmeet Singh's fault, Mr. Speaker — classic example. Quite a telling story.

[11:15]

But I'll digress here back to the motion at hand. Further to the motion's readings, we also do not support federal policies that hinder economic growth of our province and make life more affordable, including the floated social cost on carbon. Quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the carbon tax does not meet the unique needs of Saskatchewan people or Saskatchewan resources.

As I mentioned before, and I'll say it again as we debate carbon taxes yet again: the well of ideas and policies from this government has dried up. I don't know what polling they are looking at these days or who they're talking to on the doorsteps, but folks I'm talking to and the polling I'm seeing paint a very different set of priorities that we could be debating in this House.

The people I talk to say they're concerned about costs of living, concerned if they'll be able to afford to pay their power bills and buy groceries at the end of the month or if they're going to have to go to the food bank because groceries are too expensive. They're concerned about the state of our public health care system, worrying if they or their parents will end up in a blanket fort in the hallways, if they can even get an ambulance in time. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they want to make sure that their kids are in class sizes with less than 40 students and not learning in the hallways. Hallway medicine and a hallway education — the legacy of this Saskatchewan Party government.

They are looking for a government to make real progress on these fronts. And there's so much more we could be debating in this House that might actually make a difference. We should be talking about ways we could be providing relief for families under a crushing cost-of-living crisis. Prices just keep going up.

So on that front I'm glad that the member opposite moved this motion and stated that carbon taxes are making life less affordable for residents, families, and small businesses. This is very true. This we can agree on. But you know what else is making life unreasonably unaffordable in Saskatchewan? This tired and out-of-touch Saskatchewan Party government.

You know what else we've been crystal clear on, Mr. Deputy Speaker? We've been clear on our calls for relief for those same families and small businesses to the crushing cost-of-living crisis. We've been clear on the need to provide relief — relief at the pump, relief from increasing power rate hikes, relief from the regressive PST [provincial sales tax] expansion this government has overseen, the largest expansion of the PST in history. The member from Saskatoon Riversdale says we took so many people off the tax roll, and now we're taxing them with regressive PST.

And we've been clear that our province is positioned to provide this relief through our Crown corporations that we hold dear that we have in this province, through SGI, SaskTel, SaskPower, and SaskEnergy. There's so many more ways we could be making life affordable today.

I want it to be crystal clear for the people at home watching that while this government proposes debates on carbon tax at every opportunity, while blaming the federal government for their woes, I can tell you it's nothing but hot air, nothing but a smokescreen to distract from their abysmal economic and GDP [gross domestic product] record, abysmal job creation record, abysmal out-migration numbers, and the abysmal funding of our public health care and public education.

While they blame the federal government and the carbon tax for the cost of living, they ignore all the ways they could be making life more affordable for Saskatchewanians. And nowhere is that more pertinent than in their most recent budget, a vanilla budget that could have provided so much relief.

But even in a budget flush with cash, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they still manage to provide no relief from SaskPower rate increases, no relief for the power rate hikes hitting families and small businesses, rate hikes panned by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. They found no dollars to provide any relief to the continued expansion of the regressive PST.

Instead of providing relief, they continue to waste your tax dollars on court cases doomed to lose. These conservative populist slap fights with the federal government are not making life more affordable. This is nothing but a smokescreen from a tired and out-of-touch government. Nothing but a smokescreen from the fact that while they could provide real relief for families, they have opted not to.

And what really should sting for the people of Saskatchewan is that this government is essentially passing the cost of the carbon tax on to those people. They continue to refuse to develop a plan that would see the carbon tax backstop the federal government eliminated for Saskatchewan people. And in their hubris and their ideological fight, they have simply decided to slap everyone else in the province with the cost, and that should sting. They are using families, small businesses, as pawns in their fights with the feds, hoping that the crushing cost of living and power hikes will make you even more angry at the feds.

But what stings more is that the whole time, while passing carbon pricing on to consumers, they have continued to raise taxes and fees on absolutely everything. They have continued to pass those costs on to the Saskatchewan people. We've seen them continue to expand the PST on almost everything, the most regressive tax on the books that directly affects lowest income earners.

I had a text from a friend just recently: gee I wish children's clothes were still PST exempt. Remember that? Everyone remember when PST was exempt on children's clothes? I remember that as a kid, hearing that from my mom, how grateful she was at that. Again PST on everything. The same folks and families that are seeing their bills rise and seeing their food bank use skyrocket. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very crystal clear they continue to provide no relief and they don't care.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope that Saskatchewan families and small businesses will see through this smokescreen. I want to thank the member opposite for moving this debate today. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to stand here and speak to the issues and fight for the people of this province. Thank you so much.

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

**Mr. Keisig:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm happy to be on my feet today and discuss the motion brought forward by my colleague from Saskatoon Riversdale. He did a really good job of explaining the carbon taxation scheme, but I really want to talk about this social cost.

On April 19th, the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Steven Guilbeault, announced a social cost of carbon emissions. Well, as soon as I hear the word "social," I get very concerned. It's very tough to quantify any numbers or results in any of the social sciences.

A quick search showed that the federal coalition government is proposing a social cost of carbon at \$261 a tonne. In 2011 the federal government scientists had a social price of \$25 a tonne. Amazing how things changed in 12 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I just want to just go back in time a little bit, Mr. Deputy Speaker

— 1990. Saskatchewan farmers, this time of year, they're about to hit the fields and put the crop in. The scientists at the time showed that farming practices emitted 553 000 tonnes of carbon. Fast forward to today. With the same 41 million acres of cropland, Saskatchewan is sequestering 12.8 million tonnes.

Two very significant things happened over that timeline, Mr. Deputy Speaker: market forces and improved agronomic practices virtually ended summerfallow; and the invention, innovation, and adaptation of zero-till farming. These could not have happened without the resourcefulness of Saskatchewan inventors, small business, and producers. It's critical to note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that all of these changes happened with virtually zero government intervention.

So let's use the federal coalition government's figures, Mr. Deputy Speaker: 12.8 million tonnes, \$261 a tonne — it comes out to 3.3 billion. Divide that by 41 million acres; that's \$80 an acre that every farmer should be receiving.

Let's even go a step further, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Saskatchewan has over 100 million acres of forests in the far North. Studies vary, but I mean that is literally a massive carbon sink for which Saskatchewan people get absolutely no credit for, which we should.

There is absolutely no trust, Mr. Deputy Speaker, between Saskatchewan people and the federal coalition government of today. They promised the carbon tax would not go over \$50, then after the election they changed that to \$170 a tonne, and now they're forecasting this social cost of \$261 a tonne.

So let's just do some math. Fuel costs at \$65 a tonne, it works out to 14 cents a litre. At \$261 a tonne would bring fuel prices up to 56 cents a litre just on the carbon tax. I can remember being a kid and buying fuel for less than 56 cents a litre. As much as the members opposite criticize us incessantly on cost of living, with this form of taxation everyone's cost of living is going to go way up.

So at the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention in March, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was a speaker there, Sylvain Charlebois. He's a Dalhousie University professor, and he specializes in food distribution and policy. He gave a very informative presentation and a very scathing report on food inflation caused by the coalition government's carbon tax. And I want to quote something out of a newspaper article: "Not one study looked at how the carbon tax will be impacting food affordability."

How in good conscience can any government implement a tax regime without doing their due diligence, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Not one study on the basics that we all need three times a day. It's something that we have to debate.

And while we're also speaking about the societal costs of carbon taxation, we have to talk about the cost of electricity. The clean electricity standards, they're talking about dictating the end of coal by 2030 and natural gas by 2035. Our coal fleet is reaching end of life, but there is still Shand, and Boundary dam 3 can still function well into 2040. How many hundreds of millions of dollars will SaskPower lose closing these plants prematurely? Who is picking up the bill for that? It shouldn't be Saskatchewan

people.

We also have 10 natural-gas-fired electrical generating facilities running now, and there's a brand new one, Great Plains power station. It's going to come online in 2024. These plants have a 30-year lifespan. By 2035, they're still going to have 15-or-so-odd years left. So if we shut them down, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who's going to pay for that? That's into the billions and billions of dollars.

Why should Saskatchewan citizens absorb these costs based on nothing but ideological reasons?

So this week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Williston Basin Petroleum Conference was on in Regina, and I went several days. There are some really excellent presenters. And there was one presenter there, he was talking about the geopolitical forces at play globally. Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine caused other European nations to start their coal plants up again. And he gave a really good presentation talking about China and India's very ambitious plans of building more coal-fired electrical plants.

And we have a federal government that wants to close existing facilities. There's no common sense involved in any of these decisions, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Maybe the members opposite can provide some insight into this since they've supported the carbon tax from the beginning. I really, like I often wonder like how do you look your constituents in the eyes?

**An Hon. Member:** — How do you look in the mirror?

**Mr. Keisig:** — Oh, very well. You know, when people approach them and talk about how much the cost of living has increased from the carbon tax, I know every single member on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, can look Saskatchewan's people in the eye and let them know that their position on a carbon tax has been clear forever. We 100 per cent oppose the carbon tax.

Talking about the societal cost of the carbon tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would be remiss if we did not talk about our youth. So Last Mountain-Touchwood is a very rural constituency and all of the kids have to be bused in to school. Our school divisions do a great job and they are in charge of all the busing and all of the accompanying expenses.

The first year the carbon tax, strictly on diesel, was almost just under a million dollars, 2019-2020. Fast forward 2022-23, the school year was two and quarter million. Rural students pay far too much in carbon tax to get to school, and there is no alternative available. Just think of what that funding could do for all of our educational institutions. What societal costs are we putting on Saskatchewan students when these funds are going to the federal coalition government instead of into their schools?

The carbon tax is putting students at an inherent disadvantage by taking funds from their education, money that could be going to invest. Our youth are our future, and this tax is robbing students of their educational dollars. This tax is not benefiting anyone or anything by any means. It is single-handedly causing Saskatchewan residents to struggle to afford basic necessities.

[11:30]

So the federal coalition government is attacking families, students, farmers, business owners, hard-working Canadians. And yet — I have to read a quote into the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker — the member from Saskatoon Nutana said “We know it’s time for ambitious climate action using all of the tools at our disposal, including the most cost-effective regulatory and market-based approaches, such as placing a price on carbon.”

And she also stated the carbon tax is no longer up for debate. So we shouldn’t debate whether people must choose between heating their home or feeding their families? Teachers, students, and parents should be very upset at the \$37 million of educational dollars being handed over to cover the carbon tax.

Many proponents of carbon taxation, including the member from Nutana, like to use the term “price on pollution.” And they talk about how many economists support it to reduce emissions. But their claim is horribly flawed, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It only works if there is an alternative choice, and there is no alternative choice for transportation in today’s society.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I’m almost out of time. On this side of the House, our position is very clear, and I think the members opposite owe it to Saskatchewan to be clear as well. I am supporting the motion put forward by the member from Saskatoon Riversdale and look forward to hearing the member opposite’s comments. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I’m happy, like my colleague, my deskmate, the member from Saskatoon Meewasin, and my wonderful colleagues around the aisle, I’m happy to join into this debate today. Although really it seems like it’s more of a discussion today, mister deputy deputy speaker, because, as my colleague noted, really there’s not a lot of disagreement.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we’ve been crystal clear on our position on the carbon tax. And the Saskatchewan NDP does not support the carbon tax, no matter how many times the members opposite get a little bit bored, they start feeling badly about themselves, and decide that they’re going to pump their own tires to, you know, really make themselves a little bit better, a little bit bigger heading into the weekend.

We don’t support any federal policies that hinder economic growth, including the concept, the strange concept, of the social cost of carbon, Mr. Speaker. What we’re interested in, on this side of the House, is better jobs and bigger paycheques for Saskatchewan people. And our leader, the leader of the Saskatchewan NDP was darn clear about this yesterday. And to the member from Meewasin, I’m not sure if he’s napping during question period but she was clear in the House, she was clear in the scrum, she was clear online, and she will continue to be crystal clear.

Because really, Mr. Speaker, it’s a sad day if the best thing that you can do is really try and — I should choose my words carefully here, Mr. Speaker, so I’m not ejected as well — convolute the situation. Because again and again, we stand up

and we’re clear on our position and, again and again, we hear the same kind of sad and tired rhetoric from the members opposite.

So you know, Mr. Speaker, like, amen to another opportunity to say no to the federal carbon tax and the impact that it has on Saskatchewan families, small businesses, and industry. And you know, Mr. Speaker, I know this first-hand. I know this at my own kitchen table.

I run a small business. I see the cost impacts. I have had five price increases this year from suppliers since January. That’s five. The fuel surcharge I pay for my shipping is at 87 per cent right now, Mr. Speaker. My shipping charges have doubled. The cost of goods that I buy has increased nearly 30 per cent. I live this reality, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it’s challenging and it’s crushing. And it’s crushing for so many, Mr. Speaker.

And to have this government simply taking this as political talking point, as opposed to doing some of the real work that’s necessary to create a strong economy and to impact the crushing cost of living that people are dealing with right now, is frankly sad and disingenuous.

The cost of living is the single biggest concern for people in Saskatchewan right now. And people in Saskatchewan — more than anywhere else in the country — are struggling with this. Fifty-two per cent of people have that desperate economic insecurity. One in two people in this province. Regardless of your partisanship, Mr. Speaker, that’s not a good number.

You know, the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood talked about how people shouldn’t have to choose between heating their homes and paying for groceries. No, they shouldn’t. They shouldn’t. That’s why we’ve been consistent in our calls for this government to stop increasing utility rates.

You have a Crown corporation. You have the power not to take millions in dividends out of your Crown corporations to pile into the General Revenue Fund, not to take every penny you can to pile into the General Revenue Fund but to use your Crown corporations in dire economic situations, like we’re facing right now, to impact the cost of living, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Crown corporations in Saskatchewan aren’t necessarily like a . . . they’re not a partisan concept here, or they shouldn’t be. I know members opposite, you know, sometimes look at them a little greedily, and the word “privatization” comes to mind.

But Crown corporations in Saskatchewan are an inherently pragmatic concept. That’s why the people of this province love their Crowns and will defend them. For a province like Saskatchewan — dispersed populations, small population — Crown corporations make sense. They can help provide necessary public services to our residents, provide revenue to the government, and also during exceptional times, help citizens afford to live with the services they deserve.

When SaskPower was created, it certainly wasn’t the easiest business case to electrify every home and every farmstead across this province. But it was the right thing to do. And walking back the continual SaskPower rate increases and the massive SaskEnergy hike that we saw — at a time when now SaskEnergy is making money — it’s the right thing to do. And you have the ability, being stewards of these important Crown corporations.

So no, people shouldn't have to choose between heating their homes and paying for groceries, and far too often people are having to make that choice. We see this in food banks. Food bank use is through the roof. Here in Regina, in my home city, 5 per cent of the people who live in Regina — 1 in 20 people — rely on the food bank to feed themselves and their family. And these are predominantly working people. These are people with jobs. And under this government's stagnant wage growth, their income hasn't been able to keep up with the cost of inflation.

And yes, absolutely the carbon tax is making that harder. That is why we're opposed to it. It is not the right solution for Saskatchewan and it does not help our environment in Saskatchewan while making our economy stronger. And that's what we all want. There's not a person in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who I think doesn't want cleaner air. There's not a member in this House who doesn't want less pollution. That's something we all agree on. But we want a solution that's right for Saskatchewan, and we want a strong economy.

And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we talk about cost of living and we talk about the things this government can do, and we talk about taxes and we talk about how life is harder. I've touched on the utility rate hikes that are inappropriate, that should immediately be walked back. Government should do everything in their power to use the power of our Crown corporations to make life more affordable.

They also like to talk about their record, their economic record, their record on taxes. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me take this opportunity to put something on the record. Under this government, in the 16 years they've been in power, never once have they done anything but increase taxes. The PST, the single biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history — children's clothing, insurance, used vehicles.

I bought a car this year. Great for me. I'm very privileged, able to do that. I had to write a cheque to the Ministry of Finance for \$1,900 for a used car. I turn around and sell that, the next person's going to have to write another cheque to the Ministry of Finance, because this goes on in perpetuity, Mr. Deputy Speaker — the single biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history.

And if they were serious about making life more affordable, they would be looking at some of these very real tools that they have at their disposal to walk back their tax increases, to decide, hey, as a government we don't need to be taking in all of this revenue during a time when people are struggling. But have we seen any action, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the things that they can control? No. All we've seen is adding more taxes and more fee hikes at every opportunity.

And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the two members who've spoken so far, the member from Riversdale, the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood, they've mentioned a couple other things, and I'm going to try and squeeze them in here in my last 75 seconds. The member from Last Mountain-Touchwood mentioned the wonderful conference that was on this week, the Williston Basin Petroleum Conference. That's a great show, and it really highlights the innovation that we have and some of the great work that Saskatchewan has done. And I applaud all of the people there, the companies there, the businesses, the researchers, the innovators showcasing the fantastic work that

we've historically done here in Saskatchewan.

But you know what is not being funded right now under this government? Innovation and research into those historic institutions that we have here in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and I would note, founded under NDP governments — that have worked to decrease the environmental impact of traditional critical industries while increasing their economic output.

We have not seen increases of funding for many of these organizations. Great places like the EOR [enhanced oil recovery] research team at SRC [Saskatchewan Research Council], scrapped. PTRC [Petroleum Technology Research Centre], nothing much. The CCUS [carbon capture, utilization, and storage] knowledge centre, nothing. Meanwhile the Government of Alberta is funding it.

So, Mr. Speaker, under this government all we're seeing is a lot of hot air, no real concern for helping people with the cost of living. So thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

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

**Mr. Domotor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm honoured to enter in today's debate. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are once again needing to discuss the recently raised inflationary carbon tax and its drastic effect on the lives of the people of Saskatchewan. The Government of Saskatchewan is opposed to the implementation of made-in-Ottawa climate change taxes and regulations that will impose significant burdens on Saskatchewan's energy and electricity sectors, which in turn will hit the provincial economy and affordability for Saskatchewan residents. The regulations and taxes that are being imposed will result in billions in compliance costs for Saskatchewan.

It was just one year ago that the federal parliamentary budget officer testified before committee that as a result of the carbon tax, at least 60 per cent of Canadian households are financially worse off. Of course the wider economy is impacted as indirect costs are passed on to people and businesses.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's refreshing that the federal government has finally come to their senses and realized that Saskatchewan producers would be paying over 28 million in carbon tax for grain drying alone by 2030, which is not even close to being sustainable. Although they've had the good sense to reverse this decision, Mr. Deputy Speaker, producers are still being hit hard by this tax at every turn. Each farmer ends up paying carbon tax every time product comes onto their farm, on crop inputs during seeding, harvesting, shipping the grain, and on utilities to process it.

There's also a tax on transporting their grain or another product to a further-stage processor. For example, a farmer delivers his grain to a terminal. The terminal is paying carbon tax on all the energy used in that facility. The grain is loaded onto a train, then transported. The rail company is paying carbon tax on the fuel it consumes. The grain is delivered to a mill. That mill pays carbon tax on all power utilities it uses. The same mill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, delivers the flour to a bakery. The bakery is paying carbon tax on every utility it is using as well. And finally, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, the consumer buys the product and most likely pays another tax. The people of this province cannot continue to foot the outrageous bills because of the politics of our federal government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, farmers are facing massive cost increases from fertilizer, fuel, and feed. We're experiencing a very unique situation in this country and around the world with events including war, extreme weather conditions, soaring fuel prices, and top-of-the-pile supply chain disruptions. Grain is critical not only for our staples such as bread, cereals, and cooking oils, but also a majority of the products that are found in the aisles of our grocery stores. Just in 2022, the Canadian Dairy Commission has responded to rising costs at the farm level for feed, fuel, and fertilizer which are then passed on to processors and ultimately to the grocers. It's risen by over 10.9 per cent in one year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, energy bills for hog and chicken producers in this province, they're experiencing anywhere between 30 to 40 per cent of their energy costs made up of straight carbon tax.

[11:45]

Equipment manufacturers are seeing carbon tax numbers of over 30 per cent. In addition this carbon tax is also subject to GST, essentially another tax on a tax.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the carbon tax has a major effect on utilities such as SaskPower and SaskEnergy. These utilities are essential to pretty much each and every homeowner and resident to ensure you can turn the lights on when you get home, cook your meals to feed your family, and keep warm in those frigid, minus-degree Celsius days and nights that we seem to have in this province during the winter.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the federal government has published a clean electricity standard discussion paper, signalling that Canada plans to develop new federal regulations to achieve a net zero electricity grid by 2034, on top of existing carbon pricing under the output-based pricing system. The clean electricity standard intends to phase out all traditional fossil fuel-fired electricity generation which is extremely problematic for areas such as Saskatchewan that rely on fossil fuels to generate the majority of their stable, low-cost baseload electricity.

The federal government is also introducing the federal fuel standard, really another carbon tax. The prediction is that these regulations will have an impact of at least 700 million a year on both gas and diesel consumption in our province. These regulations will have a huge impact on retail, rail, the ag sector, trucking, manufacturing, and for all those using either public transportation such as buses, or fuelling up your car to go to work or take your kids to a sporting event.

The carbon tax affects all people, Mr. Speaker, and to a larger extent has more of an impact on those that are considered low income, who may not even file their income tax returns and therefore do not get the rebates that they actually are eligible for. Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax is directly driving inflation and consumer affordability. It does not lower emissions. It simply drives up the price of goods and services which directly affects rural and urban families. As of April 1st, Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax fuel charge went up 30 per cent from \$50 per tonne to \$65.

This is translated to an increase of roughly 3 cents per litre of gas, reaching a total of 14 cents per litre.

The Trudeau government originally promised the federal carbon tax would max out at \$50 per tonne, but now with the new climate action plan, it has more than tripled the ceiling. The carbon tax will now rise by \$15 per year until maxing out at 170 per tonne in 2030, a whopping increase of 240 per cent. Of course the \$170 total doesn't appear on the Canada Environment and Climate Change website but forces its readers to do their own math.

So here in the real world, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the carbon tax has been and will continue to be a much less effective tool than what was initially claimed. It appears that the federal government has actually adopted the theme from our very own Saskatchewan TeleMiracle fundraiser with respect to the implementation of their carbon tax. And where are we going? Higher, Mr. Speaker.

I say this with a grain of salt because as recently as April 19, the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Steven Guilbeault, announced that there's a new social cost of carbon which would be \$261 a tonne. He referred to this as a new tool that the federal government's going to use to fight against climate change. Mr. Speaker, this would be five times higher than the original projections done by the federal government as to what would be required in terms of the maximum number to implement a carbon tax to fight climate change.

For some reason this federal government really seems to want to punish Saskatchewan residents. When you consider on average the power generated for the province in terms of megawatts produced for the amount of megawatts consumed is approximately 70 per cent being produced from coal and natural gas generated power, it will be very challenging to meet the federal government goal of having zero per cent power generated by the end of 2030 and zero per cent being generated by fossil fuels by 2035 to reach their goal of net zero carbon emissions.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to significantly increasing the amount of renewable electricity generated from the present 35 per cent to 50 per cent by 2030, which will include additions to our existing power generation sources, which will comprise of wind, solar, hydro, biomass, geothermal, natural gas, and potentially nuclear in the future. However the technology is not there as of yet to provide not only the amount of energy we need to service the province from renewable energy sources, but also to provide the baseload power that is so important to our various industries throughout the province.

These are all terrible federal economic policies hurting Saskatchewan businesses, families, and farmers. Saskatchewan people should not be punished for living within rural Canada in a climate where they have to heat their homes and have to drive to work, which is the norm in most rural communities in Saskatchewan.

This tax does not fool the hard-working people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, believing that this will totally deny climate change, considering we presently produce only 1.6 per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions in this country. The federal carbon tax, which is essentially a tax on a tax, Mr. Speaker, will continue to increase and raise the cost of living and do nothing to reduce carbon emissions.

Mr. Speaker, Kris Sims, the British Columbia director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, points out that the province of British Columbia had its own carbon tax since 2008. They were told that the tax would lower emissions, however the truth is that emissions have gone up 10 per cent in the last three years. Mr. Speaker, just another example of how this proposed solution lacks any credibility.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that industries and families in this province cannot afford this punitive taxation. Our Saskatchewan Party government will continue to shield the residents of Saskatchewan from the massive tax grab from our industry, agriculture, farmers, and families.

Mr. Speaker, from 2019 to 2022, the tax cost our schools over 10 million that should go towards operational funding and maintenance.

Our former premier Brad Wall said the following, years ago before there was even a thing as a carbon tax. He said, and I quote:

A carbon tax will be detrimental to the economy. It will be detrimental to the citizens of Saskatchewan because it will mean that absolutely everything will cost more.

The former leader of the opposition believed that there should be a price on carbon. This is not a belief on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. With all that is good in our province right now, Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax will only try to muzzle Saskatchewan's growth plan potential and hinder our 30 goals by 2030.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I will be supporting the motion put forward by my good friend and colleague from Saskatoon Riversdale. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Feels like *Groundhog Day* in here, Mr. Speaker. You know, here we are on 75-minute debate day and we can talk once again about our opposition to the carbon tax. And it is no small concern for the people of this province and for our province as a whole and our trade-exposed industries, Mr. Speaker. So I'm happy to rise once again and to speak very clearly with respect to the concerns with respect to that carbon tax, Mr. Speaker.

I get a kick out of members opposite, Mr. Speaker. I guess they each need a turn at some point to be able to get up on their feet and to say something, you know, and then mail it out maybe to their constituents. But you know, the facts are the facts, Mr. Speaker, and our position has been clear on this front.

Now the member for Riversdale, I got a kick out of him here again today. He was saying, well you know, will the members say these things in public? You know, will they say them, you know, put them on the record, Mr. Speaker? I think he came in with that same, tired line last time we were debating that, if I recall, Mr. Speaker. I think I told him, news flash for the member from Riversdale: this stuff is all recorded in here.

And it is. I can see the cameras right up there, Mr. Speaker. And

then where folks can now find the record of this is they can simply go to [www.legassembly.sk.ca](http://www.legassembly.sk.ca), Mr. Speaker. They can click on a link there, Mr. Speaker. All of these speeches, you know, are right there, and the video is there, Mr. Speaker.

So for the member for Riversdale, you know, that's . . . Well he's not so new around here, Mr. Speaker, anymore. We know he hasn't been very active in his role standing up for his constituents or the people of the province, but he's not so new around here anymore, Mr. Speaker. It's right there, hidden away on [legassembly.sk.ca](http://legassembly.sk.ca), and there's video, Mr. Speaker.

But more than video, Mr. Speaker, there's some good folks right up here. Like these are fine civil servants that work day in, day out to transcribe our words, Mr. Speaker, as jumbled as they often are. They often make us more coherent than we are on video, Mr. Speaker. But the good people of Hansard, Mr. Speaker, they're transcribing our speeches day in and day out.

And so for the not-so-new member for Riversdale, you know, he can simply go to the same website, Mr. Speaker, and he can do a little bit of a Google search. In fact what he could search is he could search carbon tax, and then he could attach it to the different constituencies.

And he'd find a historical record, certainly, that's consistent on this side, Mr. Speaker. I know I've entered in many, many, many times on this front, you know, being clear with respect to our opposition to the carbon tax, very concerned as well with federal policies that impede opportunity in our industries in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we've been clear on those things as well. We've been good and clear, Mr. Speaker, about the importance of getting our products to tidewater, our products to market. Certainly pipelines are an incredibly important part of that, Mr. Speaker. We've been crystal clear and pushed this government over the years.

And of course this is a government that's really failed on these fronts, Mr. Speaker. You know, a lot of rhetoric and noise, Mr. Speaker, a few tweets from, you know, this Premier and the one before, Mr. Speaker. But you know, they really have been ineffective in building out those critical infrastructure projects, Mr. Speaker. Really, really failed in getting that pipeline capacity built, Mr. Speaker. Moreover though, really weak and failing as well when it comes to making sure that our rail, our transportation system, performs for exporters from Saskatchewan, something so important to producers and all of our exporters here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

You know what this government's also been really weak at, is making the case as to why the carbon tax doesn't make sense for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and for Canada, why it places our trade-exposed industries at risk. And they simply left Saskatchewan people and families and farms and businesses taking that price, Mr. Speaker.

So you know, we hear a lot of noise from the side opposite, but no meaningful action to provide some relief and some protection on this front, no measures to address those trade-exposed industries in the challenges that they face, Mr. Speaker.

All we've really seen from them, Mr. Speaker, is just pile on with a slew of new taxes and costs, Mr. Speaker, on top of the carbon

tax. It defies common sense, Mr. Speaker. You know, of course we've seen the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history being imposed upon Saskatchewan people and businesses. At the same time, Saskatchewan businesses and farms are being hit with a federal carbon tax that doesn't make any sense, Mr. Speaker.

But what does that government choose to do? Well they fail making the argument, Mr. Speaker. They fail to bring forward any measures to offer up relief or protection, but then they just pile on with a bunch of new costs. Where'd they stick it, Mr. Speaker? They stuck it on used cars. They stuck it on children's clothing. They stuck it on restaurants. They stuck it on insurance, Mr. Speaker — insurance — something that you know, at the end of the day, we want to encourage people to be able to ensure that they're insured and have that level of protection. It makes, you know, economic and fiscal sense, Mr. Speaker, and gives folks that protection.

Of course they stuck it on construction labour, Mr. Speaker, the epitome of a job-killing tax brought to you by that Sask Party government, imposed on top of that nonsensical federal carbon tax. It's put this province at a competitive disadvantage, and it's hurt the investment that we should have been securing in our province, the projects that should have been going forward, the jobs that should have been created, Mr. Speaker. But we hear a bunch of, you know, tired rhetoric from this government but no relief, no action on these fronts.

With respect to the carbon tax now, Mr. Speaker, of course we're opposed to the federal carbon tax. That government, you know, after failing to make the case for Saskatchewan people, now is throwing in the towel and they're going to start collecting it, Mr. Speaker. They're collecting it on power bills. They're collecting it on energy bills. That's the Sask Party government carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, and it's just another cost for Saskatchewan people. And they are offering no relief back to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

We're calling for relief with those dollars, and we're calling for investments in renewable power and rooftop solar and energy efficiency retrofits, Mr. Speaker, that could work with homes and businesses and farms and municipal infrastructure and First Nations across Saskatchewan to reduce emissions, to bring forward more affordability when it comes to utilities, and to create thousands of jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Now we see the same in agriculture, Mr. Speaker. We have a government that's failed producers and the invaluable role that they play, of course, in feeding the world. The best producers in the world, but they're stuck taking that carbon price on front after front, Mr. Speaker, with no relief from this provincial government, who's failed to make the case that producers should receive recognition or an offset or a rebate structure, Mr. Speaker, to recognize their work in sequestration, a widespread practice that's been transformational and that's sequestered so much carbon like zero-till, Mr. Speaker. And then very importantly, you know, our hard-hit livestock sector, Mr. Speaker, who play such an invaluable role in managing and protecting grass and wetlands, who should be receiving compensation or a rebate or an offset for that invaluable work.

[12:00]

But these guys, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party, they sit on their hands. They failed to make the case with the federal government, and they just stick them with new costs on front after front after front, Mr. Speaker. So that's the MO [modus operandi] of the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker: all talk, no walk; all hat, no cattle. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the nonsensical carbon tax, they failed to make the case or to provide relief. All they've done is stuck Saskatchewan people with more costs and taxes on top of that though, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The 65-minute period has expired. The 10-minute question-and-answer period will begin. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Mr. Teed:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, we heard a lot of hot air coming from . . . on this debate, and we might have to slap some carbon taxes on that.

But you know, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, I have a question for him. Does he think that the carbon tax is the only tax in the world? Or is he willing to talk about how other tax hikes . . . Referencing the largest PST expansion in the history of Saskatchewan, will he be willing to talk about how that's affected Saskatchewan people?

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

**Mr. Friesen:** — Wow. Hot air, Mr. Speaker. That's a little rich. Just listening to the member from Regina Rosemont, I don't think he even spoke about carbon tax. But anyways, taxes. Yes, I'm very happy to talk about taxes. And you know, some of the things that I heard over there today about taxes are actually factually incorrect anyways, as far as when you pay tax on a used vehicle.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I'd caution the member to . . . Facts are facts, and so be very cautious with that tone of language. Thanks.

**Mr. Friesen:** — Correct the record, Mr. Speaker. Carbon tax is a big part of the problem. And one of the things that I find interesting is that the opposition doesn't even realize what an effect it has on the cost of living. They can't correlate the two. The NDP, when they were in government 16 years ago, had 21 taxes in 16 years — 21 tax increases, Mr. Speaker. So I would love to talk more about that with you again. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

**Mr. Bonk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan, we have something called agriculture. I'll help the members opposite to understand what that is. And recently there was a committee in Ottawa that discussed . . . It was the agriculture and agri-food parliamentary committee, and they were trying to figure out the cause of food inflation. And there was two words that kept coming up over and over and over again in that discussion, and that was carbon tax.

And Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, he's probably the foremost expert in Canada on agri-food policy. Good guy. And quote from him, he said:

We've seen some policies in recent years that are honestly



unfairly penalizing farmers. Farmers are price-takers. They have to absorb the carbon tax.

To the member from Saskatoon Meewasin: do you agree that farmers are unfairly penalized by the carbon tax? And will you commit to telling your federal leader to end his support for this tax?

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

**Mr. Teed:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll first note that my leader sits right here, the right member from Regina Lakewood. And yes, we have called for an investigation in this Chamber, which the government decided not to take up and which would have included carbon tax. So absolutely.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, people come to this building. Real people come to this building. People who aren't in politics, they come and they want to be heard. They want to feel that, when they come to the government and talk about an issue, the government is going to take them seriously and hear them out and consider and care about it.

So, Mr. Speaker, to the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood — I know he's a union guy: were you able to look the steelworkers in the eyes yesterday?

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

**Mr. Keisig:** — Thank you for the question from the member opposite. It was a great meeting with the steelworkers. We had a fantastic conversation. We talked about all of the great job that is done at Evraz, how that is a carbon-neutral steel mill, and all of the environmental benefits that we are gaining by cleaning up so many of the abandoned farmyards. And that is the message that we are going to tell to the province, to the country, and to the world. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

**Mr. Dennis:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Members of the opposition are on record supporting lawsuits against the provincial government that want to take away the constitutional natural resource rights of the province, and supporting the carbon tax. To the member from Saskatoon Meewasin: do you believe that Saskatchewan should be penalized with bans on phosphate and impose an imposition of the carbon tax? Or should we be fuelling and feeding the world without an unfair price to our producers?

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

**Mr. Teed:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, I did take history in university, and I think it was 1982 that Blakeney and Lougheed enshrined those resource rights in the

Constitution — an NDP government that enshrined those — and that's where they'll stay.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, of course we're opposed to the federal carbon tax and we'll keep pushing on that front, Mr. Speaker. But to the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood: why on earth does he think it's fair for his constituents and the businesses to have the PST stuck on construction labour, Mr. Speaker, the PST that they added as a government?

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

**Mr. Keisig:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Saskatchewan people have always been very aware of economics. In my constituency, they are a large majority of small-business owners and they understand that you have to pay to have the services that we all provide and that is a fair form of taxation that we have to implement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

**Ms. C. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Members of the opposition are on record as saying that "We don't think of the carbon tax as a tax. This is a price on pollution and a necessary one." While that might be the opposition's position, this government supports one of the most sustainable and environmentally conscious energy sectors in the world.

To the member from Regina University: do you also believe that Saskatchewan people and industry should have to pay a carbon tax despite their comparatively strong environmental record?

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've been crystal clear on whether or not the carbon tax is a right fit for Saskatchewan, and absolutely not. No it isn't.

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

**Mr. Teed:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Question to the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford, just to share some love in here today: at what point will the provincial government quit squabbling with the feds to distract us all from our last-in-the-country economy?

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

**Mr. Domotor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the member opposite for their question, and I appreciate you raising this issue. However I believe the real issue here is how are we going to maintain our baseload power with the federal government's policies of reducing electricity by 2030 with respect to using coal and by 2035 with fossil fuels.

When you consider that 76 per cent of our power is right now generated by coal and fossil fuels, where are we going to replace that power? The federal government's not even recognizing the new technologies that industry has adopted in reducing our emissions throughout the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Grewal:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Based on federal estimates and on farm diesel fuel consumption in 2019, the additional cost to Saskatchewan farmers from the clean fuel standards would range from 54 million to 176 million by 2030. That's on top of the carbon tax that drives up the cost of our farmers.

My question, to the member from Regina Elphinstone, do you believe it is fair that Saskatchewan producers, some of the most sustainable on the planet . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Regina University, continue to be penalized by the federal government? And will you denounce your federal leadership for supporting this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's what leadership looks like over there, Mr. Speaker. We've been clear on this. We know our positions, even if the member opposite doesn't know which members are participating in the debate.

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

**Mr. Steele:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The federal government has published a clean electricity standard discussion paper signalling that the Canada's plan to develop a new federal regulation to achieve net zero electricity grid for 2023, on top of existing carbon pricing, the CES [clean electricity standard] intends to phase out the traditional fossil fuel-fired electricity and generation, and generation which is extremely problematic for the jurisdictions of Saskatchewan that rely on fossil fuels to generate most of their stable, low-cost baseload electricity.

To the member from Saskatoon Meewasin, do you support the federal government's plan to achieve a net zero electricity grid by 2035 by shutting down the liquified gas and coal while increasing the carbon tax?

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

**Mr. Teed:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With four seconds on the clock, I'll say no.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The 75-minute debate period has expired.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

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

#### Motion No. 3 — Funding for Public Education

**Ms. Conway:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker rather. It's an honour to be on my feet. I will be moving a motion at the end of my remarks, calling on the government to adequately fund public education in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I want to just begin my . . . the Education minister is already chirping from his seat. So buckle up, this is going to be a wild ride, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I hope people are tuning in at home. I hope to touch on the school choice movement, which the Education minister likes to talk about a lot.

But I want to begin my comments and frame them with a quote from Alfie Kohn, a well-regarded thinker out of the States who's done a lot of writing on public education, and really this quote goes to the promise of public education so I'll read it into the record:

Ideally public schools can enrich lives, nourish curiosity, and introduce students to new ways of formulating questions and finding answers. Their existence also has the power to strengthen a democratic society in part by extending those benefits to vast numbers of people who didn't fare nearly as well before the great experiment of free public education began.

That's the promise of public education, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it reminds us how high the stakes are. But unfortunately we see in Sask Party Saskatchewan when revenues are not what they've hoped, when times are tough, we see cuts to classrooms.

That's what we've seen for years under the excuse of, you know, times are tough. But then as we learned this year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, under the Sask Party's Saskatchewan when we have windfall revenues, billions of dollars of windfall revenues we also see cuts to the classroom. That's the Sask Party Saskatchewan that we live in today, Mr. Speaker, and it's a shame. It's a damn shame.

Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic when we know needs are higher, it's really spectacular to see how this government is getting it so wrong on the public education file. But unfortunately what we're seeing from this government is right out of a tried and true, far-right conservative playbook, Mr. Speaker — neglect, cut, underfund the public system; push, promote public funds for private education which in turn further weaken the public system.

A 0.7 per cent increase for public schools, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which will no doubt clinch the fact that we've fallen to the back of the pack, the back of the national pack in terms of per-student funding when we used to be first. We used to be first. Contrast it against a 25 per cent increase — I have the order in council right in front of me, Mr. Deputy Speaker — a 25 per cent increase for qualified independent schools. It's just, it's really . . . It truly boggles the mind.

At a time when we know public schools are in need, when students are coming out of a pandemic, when mental health challenges are at an all-time high, when English-as-an-additional-language challenges are at an all-time high, a 0.7 per cent increase which will result in cuts.

[12:15]

And we know. The news keeps rolling out each day about what this will actually mean for school boards and classrooms — cuts across the board. And you know, it's very perplexing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We also see at that same time two very sets of different rules for qualified independent schools and public schools.

As we became very clear in the administrative reports that were released last week — heavily redacted, mind you — but what we were able to glean, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in some of these schools students with learning challenges and special needs would not be admitted. We learned that teaching duties were being assigned to non-teachers. And we discovered that relatives of the director of some of these schools were on staff.

At a time when, I believe, three of these schools are under investigation for abuse, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at a time when Grace Capstone, their funding wasn't even pulled for a child care centre. It's still receiving over \$200,000 a year from this Ministry of Education. Meanwhile, 0.7 per cent increase to public schools.

We have students with more intensive needs than ever. The facts remain: needs are high and they're getting higher, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've seen, since 2007, a 38 per cent increase in intensive needs. Meanwhile, we have one psychologist for every 2,800 students, one speech pathologist for every 1,300 students, one social worker for every nearly 3,000 students, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Meanwhile, you know, instead we see the Sask Party government instead prioritizing things like collecting our own taxes, something no one asked for. For creating an American-style marshal service, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at great expense, while our students in our classrooms are facing cuts.

And let's be crystal clear. There are resources. There's money in the bank, there are windfall revenues, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's not just the windfall revenues, it's the continued waste and fiscal mismanagement we see from the Sask Party government: 138 million on an AIMS [administrative information management system] IT program that hasn't even gone live; an IT program for child protection that was supposed to cover all of the mandate of the Ministry of Social Services and cost \$15 million, now costs \$80 million; and as we learned last week, an additional \$25 million to support the rollout of the failed SIS [Saskatchewan income support] program. Their priorities are all out of whack, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And by doing this, they're failing not only our kids and our teachers, they're also increasing the cost and burden on other systems.

This is because public education does not happen in a vacuum, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It does not take place separate from other social forces like poverty, like crime; other institutions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, like the justice system, like the health care system, all of which will be forced to pick up the pieces of this neglect of public education. They're also, in doing this, in starving public education, ripping the rug out from under further economic growth and strength.

And that's what we're seeing from this government: the worst jobs growth rate in the province under this Premier's watch. The

last five years, his legacy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. How do we build good-paying jobs? By creating a skilled workforce, a well-educated, skilled workforce, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And they're doing it all under the guise of choice.

And this is really what gets to me the most, Mr. Speaker, is to watch the Education minister get up day after day and talk about choice: oh, well is the opposition against choice? Let's look at that word "choice," because it actually comes from somewhere, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The school choice movement comes from the United States, and they keep parroting it in here. The school choice movement is comprised of two features, two main features: mandatory standardized testing with financial consequences; and two, an open marketplace of schools wherein students can attend schools that are managed like businesses.

The school choice movement started under George W. Bush. It was further pursued under Trump, and it has led to increased inequality, social and economic inequality, and it has led to increased class and racial segregation. We actually see worse racial segregation right now in schools in the United States than we had under formal segregation, legal segregation. Why does this tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government continue to import failed American-style social experiments?

So it is with great concern to hear this minister talk about choice. And it is not at all surprising that last week we again heard that they're flirting with the idea of standardized testing, because of course we know this is one of the main features of the school choice movement. And after the Sask Party's attempt in 2013 to bring about standardized testing — due to protest, they had to shelve it in 2014 — we know that this is part of their plan. We know that this comes right out of that alt-right conservative playbook.

What he really means by school choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a plan to funnel public dollars to private education and further neglect the public system, which for too many — which for the majority — will result in no meaningful choice at all. And if you're still not convinced that this is the plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's look at other features of the school choice movement. Because each time we see the school choice movement rear its head, it usually comes — and further privatization to education — it usually comes with taking power away from school boards and teachers.

School boards are always a target of the school choice movement. And indeed one of the first acts that we saw from the Sask Party government, as you well know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the decision to take taxing power away from local school boards, giving them no real choice at all. The boards' abilities to levy taxes were revoked under this government, reducing their power and autonomy over budgets. No ability for course correction when they see these kinds of budgets. No ability to backfill and put students in classrooms first under that decision. Centralizing fiscal control, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And this new distance learning Crown corporation is just a further example of the Sask Party government's pattern of further centralizing power, just the latest chapter in an established pattern of centralizing control over public education. They don't trust teachers. They don't trust elected trustees. There are no longer partnerships in the education sector. It's top down, deeply

ideological — undemocratic nonsense, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and it's going to leave so many kids behind. So we have to think about that when we hear the Minister of Education talk about school choice. It's more doublespeak from the Sask Party government, kind of like growth that works for everyone, when we know more and more people are being left behind.

And that is why Saskatchewan, just this past weekend, witnessed one of the largest mass mobilizations in my lifetime, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's what that was. It's something that they're dismissing as just a union rally, just a bargaining rally; it wasn't attended by a broad swath of society.

I was there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was there with six of my colleagues. There were teachers. There were students. There were families. There were grandparents. There were concerned citizens. There was a huge swath of society that attended that rally, not just from here in Regina. From across the province, urban and rural alike. But this is all part of their plan to undermine public teachers — oh, they're just lazy; they're just greedy; they just want more money. Shame on them.

When we know their main issues . . . One of their main issues is classroom sizes and classroom complexity. When the minister said, when the Minister for Advanced Education said the only ones who care about classroom size and the only ones talking about it are the opposition, he was dead wrong. And if he had attended the rally this past weekend, he would've heard that concern echoed by over 3,500 other people.

But let's look at the pay issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In 2016 five out of seven contracts settled below inflation. Teachers have basically lost about 7.8 per cent in purchasing power due to low wages, low wage increases. This is turning this into a public issue because the Premier and that Minister of Education are failing to be proactive.

Teachers have received an average 7 per cent over six years, so they are the lowest paid now out of BC [British Columbia], Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario. We all know of people who have left the teaching profession, unfortunately. And we all know of teachers who have decided to leave the province to go elsewhere. This is another one of those stories behind this Premier's highest rates of out-migration in the country, people leaving to go elsewhere.

And now we have just heard that community schools will no longer have any additional classroom supports. One teacher I spoke to at the rally, who teaches in a community school in Coronation Park, she was the one teacher that could go classroom to classroom, help out those kids that were struggling with reading, help with those kids that were struggling with math, kids that many of whom come from really difficult situations, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They really benefit from that extra help. She's been cut. She's been cut.

And she told me, "I love teaching in community schools. It's my passion. Those are the students that I'm passionate about teaching. But I'm not going to do it anymore because I can't do it without any in-class supports." Coronation Park, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I sure hope that the people of Coronation Park will send this government a message in their upcoming by-election.

Education is and is supposed to be and it can be a great equalizer, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Public schools, where the vast majority of Saskatchewan students are educated, where the vast majority of vulnerable children get an education, where the vast majority of teachers teach in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they don't deserve cuts. They deserve investments, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's no wonder our leader walked out of here or was escorted out of here yesterday, Mr. Speaker, because the amount of spin we're hearing from this government, these tired and out-of-touch talking points . . . Saskatchewan people deserve a government that is straight with them. They deserve a robustly funded education system. They deserve a government that can deliver. And they deserve to again have a public education system that is the envy of the rest of the country.

So with that, it is my absolute honour to move the motion:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to adequately fund public education in Saskatchewan.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to adequately fund public education in Saskatchewan.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'd like to thank the member from Regina Elphinstone for a powerful speech in which I feel like I learned a lot today. So I hope other folks were listening and learned a lot too. I know others will be eager to enter into this discussion. I'm prepared now to move to adjourn debate on this motion.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned till Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:31.]



# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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