



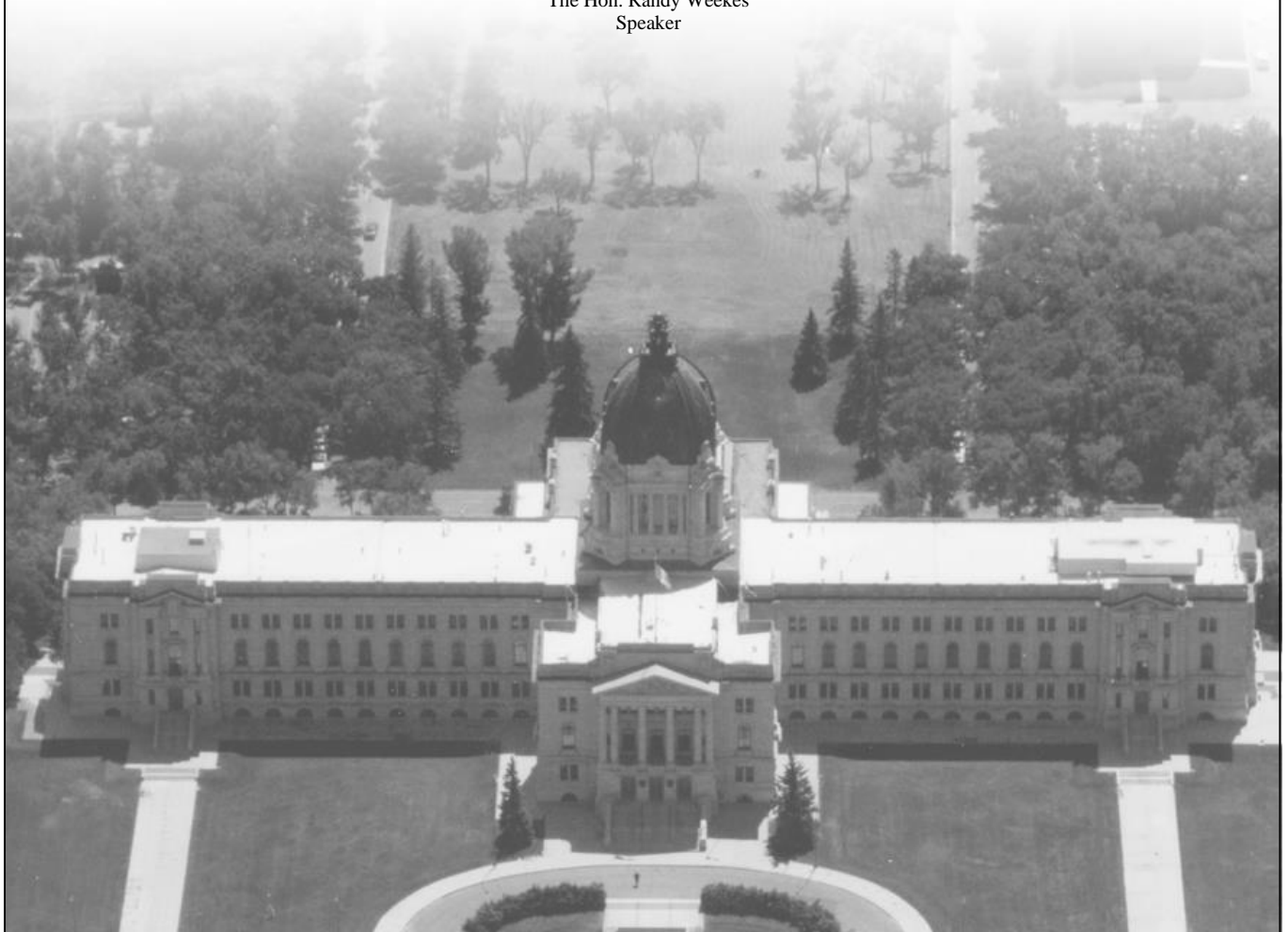
THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
3rd Session — 29th Legislature

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

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

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

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 Burianyak
Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

Hansard on the internet
Hansard and other documents of the
Legislative Assembly are available
within hours after each sitting.

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

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Wyant.....	3881
Bowes.....	3881
Wilson.....	3881
Harrison, D.....	3881
Ritchie.....	3881
Bonk.....	3881
Wotherspoon.....	3882
Lawrence.....	3882
Dennis.....	3882
Eyre.....	3882
Ross, A.....	3883
Bradshaw.....	3883
Moe.....	3883

PRESENTING PETITIONS

McLeod.....	3883
Teed.....	3883
Ritchie.....	3883

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mother's Day

Kaeding.....	3884
--------------	------

Moose Hide Campaign Day

Bowes.....	3884
Lambert.....	3885

Battlefords North Stars Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League Champions

Cockrill.....	3884
---------------	------

Fire in the Kitchen Cook-Off

Love.....	3884
-----------	------

Hunter's Eastview Bowl Recognized for Support of Special Olympians

Merriman.....	3885
---------------	------

Support for Ukrainian Post-Secondary Students in Saskatchewan

Bonk.....	3885
-----------	------

QUESTION PERIOD

Affordability and Cost of Living

Beck.....	3886
Moe.....	3886

Protection of Children in Care

Conway.....	3886
Makowsky.....	3886

Provision of Information on the Health Care System

Love.....	3888
Merriman.....	3888

Support for Forestry Businesses

Wilson.....	3888
Reiter.....	3889

Role of Parents in Education

Wilson.....	3889
Duncan.....	3890

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Enhancements to Pathway for Licensing Internationally Educated Nurses

Merriman.....	3890
Love.....	3891

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Affordability and Cost of Living

Love.....	3891, 3900
Harrison, D.....	3893, 3901
Wotherspoon.....	3895, 3901
Goudy.....	3896, 3900
Sarauer.....	3897, 3901
Nerlien.....	3899, 3901
Keisig.....	3900

Teed.....	3900
Friesen	3900
Ross, A.	3901
Bradshaw.....	3901

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 2 — Government's Health Human Resources Action Plan

Ross, A.	3902
---------------	------

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask for leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I am pleased to introduce two guests sitting in your gallery. Mr. Speaker, the first guest is Viktoriia Knyhnytska. Mr. Speaker, Viktoriia and her family came to Saskatchewan to escape the war in Ukraine. Viktoriia was instrumental in the announcement that our government made this morning regarding our Ukrainian students and tuition costs for their post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, our Ukrainian students are in a unique situation and our government is committed to supporting those who have come to our province to escape the war in their home country. Viktoriia is applying to the University of Saskatchewan with the hopes of pursuing a career in medicine. It was when she applied that she was told she would be paying international student tuition rates. She brought her concerns regarding tuition costs to her local MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] who then got in touch with our office immediately.

I want to thank Viktoriia for making our government aware of the situation so that we could take the appropriate action and make post-secondary education at one of our excellent institutions more accessible to all Ukrainian students who have made Saskatchewan their home.

Mr. Speaker, my next guest is His Worship, Kevin Kay. Kevin is the mayor of Wawota. Mr. Speaker, Kevin also advocated to his local MLA to help the Ukrainian students. And I was happy to have Kevin take part in our announcement this morning to talk about the positive impacts that Ukrainians have had on Wawota and how the community has rallied around them to make them feel at home here in Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to help me welcome Viktoriia and Kevin to their Legislative Assembly and wish Viktoriia luck with her medical school endeavours.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the minister in welcoming Viktoriia and Kevin to the legislature today, to their legislature. It's a pleasure to have you. Thank you so much for your important advocacy.

Post-secondary education is very top of mind for us. Affordability is key for students in our province, including for newcomers like yourselves. Really appreciate the efforts that you're taking to draw awareness to affordability issues around gaining a post-secondary education in our province and happy to chat with you if we get an opportunity further. It would be a pleasure to meet you. Thanks for joining us.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to introduce Mr. Lorry Matton and his son Corry Matton, seated in your gallery, the Speaker's gallery.

Lorry Matton was born and raised in the Hudson Bay area, where he raised four children and five grandchildren. He's a proud business owner of a saw mill, which he took over from his grandfather. His son Corry is now involved in the operation, making it a fourth-generation business.

The Matton family wants to continue as forestry entrepreneurs, contributing to our local economy through the industry, which is a foundational pillar of Saskatchewan's proud history. Please join me in welcoming Lorry and Corry Matton to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the minister and the member opposite for welcoming Viktoriia and Kevin to their legislature. I too want to enjoy it. They're my constituents and I really appreciate having Viktoriia in our local community. Thank you.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the member in welcoming Lorry and Corry Matton to their Assembly here today, and also want to share my encouragement in terms of your business and your efforts to ensure that you continue to have a viable business in forestry in the Carrot River constituency. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Mr. Bonk: — Thank you. I too would like to join with the members and offer a warm welcome to Kevin Kay, the mayor of Wawota, to Viktoriia Knyhnytska. And I'm sure she's the only person that's been . . . Her name's been mispronounced by three different people in the House this session so far.

And also I'd like to have a warm welcome to Kevin Weedmark from Moosomin. Kevin Weedmark is the editor . . . he's editor-owner, he's the photographer, he does just about everything at

The World-Spectator, along with his wonderful staff there. He's also the Chair of the chamber of commerce in Moosomin, and just a great community leader there. And I know I couldn't be more proud to have the Ukrainian community that we have in Moosomin and Wawota and the whole area there. And we're just so proud.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Ukrainian.]

I ask all members to welcome these guests to their Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with members to certainly welcome Viktoriia and Mayor Kay to their Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Thank you so much for their leadership and their advocacy and their service.

And I want to join in with the introduction with the member from Moosomin of Kevin Weedmark, a strong economic leader in that Moosomin area for a very long time, owner of *The World-Spectator*, editor of *The World-Spectator*, and also so active on all things economic development, whether it's chairing the chamber of commerce or back when there was the regional economic development regions, someone that was a real active leader on those fronts as well. So it's a pleasure to welcome Kevin, Kevin, and Viktoriia to their Assembly.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seated in the west gallery I have 28 grade 6 students from St. Mary School. They are accompanied by Jenni Peeke and Dee Chamberlain, their teachers. And I had the opportunity to meet with some of these young people a couple of weeks ago where they questioned me in the classroom. Now they get to see our classroom, and I hope we're as well-behaved as they were today. And I'd be happy to answer all your questions after question period. Thank you.

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

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to welcome 19 grade 6 students from the Springside School. Give a wave. I met with them earlier, gave them a little ice cream a little early in the day. I hope the teachers aren't too mad, or the parents. Five parent chaperones too as well, and some of them even had ice cream too.

So anyway I'd like to welcome Julie Wilson. She is the teacher that brought them here today. And also wish her a happy birthday today — it's her birthday. I met with them earlier. They're a great class, and I thank them for coming out. It's a long trip here. Enjoy the proceedings today and probably a little friction going on. I'd ask everyone to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Leave for 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. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery, I'd like to introduce my parents, Wayne and Sigrid, and my son Max. My mom and Max have been here a couple of times, but my dad has never been so it's lovely to show him around.

Like many parents of members, I'm sure, my parents are loyal viewers of QP [question period]. Today they get to see it live. My dad was just saying recently, he wonders when we answer questions so effectively, Mr. Speaker, how the other side can keep asking the same questions, in some cases questions they asked two or three years ago, or how they don't give up entirely. But I'm sure all parents and supporters feel the same way.

Mr. Speaker, my son grew up in Saskatoon with me. My mom grew up on a farm north of Pelly, my dad in Saskatoon. Both were teachers. Both were also lecturers at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] in English and ag. My dad was also a reporter back in the '70s at the *StarPhoenix*, then an editor at the U of S alumni magazine for many years.

And then there's Max, the guy with the golden voice, who's been at Edwards School of Business this past year. He's head of the Marketing Students' Society before he's even decided if he's going to major in marketing, Mr. Speaker. His true passion is performing, which I know he will do, but a sensible degree is important — that's his mother speaking — and this way he can act and run a theatre company or a production company. He's off to Laval University for a month of French et pour s'améliorer son français énormément, n'est-ce pas, mon ami [Translation: and to improve his French a great deal, of course, my friend].

Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say that among our colleagues on this side we don't generally make a big deal of personal circumstances. We get here, we show up, we get on with it. We do the job, the job we love. Doing the job I love, that I am so honoured to do, would have been next to impossible without my parents. Max has lived with them Monday to Thursday through sessions since he was 11. I miss him a great deal when I drive away Monday mornings, and I must say as an involved parent but complete non-techie, a FaceTime is actually quite a wonderful thing. It's very helpful to be able to talk to each other that way and hammer things out, whenever it is.

The four of us are always hammering things out. We are always talking. My whole life I have always wondered how anyone could ever be bored when there's so much to talk about, the politics to talk about. And my parents have introduced me to so much: to poetry, to books, to music, and the mantra — it was Dali — that the individual it's always right.

I am so lucky, Mr. Speaker. I introduce the three people who are dearest to me and I would ask that we welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I would like to introduce a friend of mine, Miss Donna Barr, who has joined us today. Donna has been a friend for a number of years and has been a good support to me in the political world. She has done a lot to help me. So I really would like to ask everyone to join me in welcoming Donna to her Legislative Assembly today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would also like to welcome Lorry Matton to his Legislative Assembly. He comes from the fine town of Hudson Bay where forestry is very important, Mr. Speaker, along with other areas of Carrot River Valley. And I want to thank him for coming down here and being the forester that he is. So I'd like everyone here to welcome Lorry to his Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Minister of Justice in welcoming her family to this Legislative Assembly. And as we say many times, folks on the floor of this Assembly, we never serve alone. We only serve with the love and support of our families that often are helping out in such great ways, whether it be back home in our community with our immediate families as well.

And so I would just very much like to join with the Minister of Justice and also join her in thanking Wayne, Sigrid, for all that you do in helping our Minister of Justice, because we keep her quite busy down here from Monday to Thursday and sometimes Friday and Saturday and Sunday, Max. And we apologize for that, but join with her in welcoming her family to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

[10:15]

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, as well as receiving slightly lower incomes than they will receive in 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 Moose Jaw. I do so present.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise today to present our petition calling on the government to adequately fund public education. Mr. Speaker, it's the government's opinion, as stated in question period only a couple weeks ago, that only the opposition cares about class sizes and adequate education funding. But boy, were they wrong on April 29th.

I was proud to join the Leader of the Opposition and six of my colleagues while we rallied on the steps of the legislature with over 3,000 people, including teachers, educational assistants, students, parents, grandparents, ed support workers, community members, and small-business owners. All who rallied on the steps of the legislature are calling on this government to adequately fund public education.

People all over Saskatchewan from all walks of life, teachers or not, are demanding adequate funding and assert that education funding included in the '23-24 provincial budget is wholly inadequate and will lead to cuts, cuts that have been announced by Saskatoon Public School divisions and others around the province.

Mr. Speaker, 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 provide adequate, sustainable, and equitable and predictable funding for our 27 public and separate school divisions to ensure that schools, teachers, and other caring professionals are able to meet the needs of every student in Saskatchewan.

The undersigned are from Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition to address the cost-of-living crisis. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that inflation is the highest it's been in more than three decades; that half of Saskatchewan residents were living paycheque to paycheque before transportation and food costs skyrocketed in 2022; that the Sask Party government's 32 new fees and tax hikes make life more expensive, all while harming struggling industries like tourism, culture, and fitness. While other provinces acted, the Sask Party government ignored the opposition's calls for a gas-price-relief plan.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the

Government of Saskatchewan to meaningfully address the affordability crisis in Saskatchewan.

This petition is signed by the residents of Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Mother's Day

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With Mother's Day just around the corner, I want to recognize all of Saskatchewan's hard-working, loving, and dedicated mothers. And, Mr. Speaker, this includes all mothers, whether you're an adoptive mom, a community mom, an elder, or the teacher that often gets called mom in the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, moms do it all. They often teach us our first lessons about the world and help us become the people that we are. And that can involve everything from providing basic needs like food and shelter, to emotional support and encouragement, to that stern reminder that she is ultimately in charge.

I'd like to recognize my own mother, Phyllis Kaeding. At 82 years old, her actions still speak louder than her words. She has instilled in me a strong faith, to be respectful, and to help your community. The mothers in our lives are there to guide us and support us to make sure that we're prepared for the challenging world that we live in. The influence of our moms will never be forgotten.

I would ask all members to join me in recognizing the mothers across the province who have given their time and love to make us the best that we are. And I would encourage everyone to visit, call, or text the mother figures in our lives. We are nothing without you and you deserve our love, respect, and gratitude for everything that you do. Happy Mother's Day. Thank you.

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

Moose Hide Campaign Day

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Moose Hide Campaign Day. This campaign is Indigenous-led and has been endorsed by numerous organizations, including the Assembly of First Nations and the Native Women's Association of Canada.

The campaign specifically calls on men and boys to take action to end violence against women and children. It draws these sobering facts to our attention, Mr. Speaker, that one in two of all Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since age 16, that spousal violence towards Indigenous women is three times higher than non-Indigenous women, that every two and a half days a woman or girl is murdered in Canada, that Indigenous women are killed at six times the rate of non-Indigenous women.

The Moose Hide Campaign calls on men to stand in solidarity with women and children to actively work to honour, respect, and

protect them and to speak out against gender-based and domestic violence, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has the highest rates of domestic violence in the entire country and one of the worst rates of sexual violence in Canada.

I urge all members of this Assembly, and particularly men, to vocally take part in Moose Hide Campaign Day today and to sincerely commit to taking action to end the crisis of violence against women and children.

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

Battlefords North Stars Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League Champions

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last time I rose in this Assembly, the Battlefords North Stars were just finishing up a magnificent regular season. Well I'm happy to report now that those Battleford North Stars are SJHL [Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League] champions after defeating Weyburn, Melfort, and Flin Flon to bring home the Canterra Seeds Cup. I think actually in fact the member from Melfort still owes me some doughnuts from his local bakery, but we'll settle that later, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the SJHL playoff run featured some great performances by Kian Bell, Holden Doell, Jake Southgate, and Josh Kotai. But the playoff MVP [most valuable player] was Steven Kesslering, who hails from the community of Viceroy and who scored 14 goals in 13 games, Mr. Speaker.

The North Stars are now off to Centennial Cup in Portage la Prairie and played their first game this morning against Kam River. The local support for the North Stars has been fantastic, with big crowds all year long. And we've also seen the city of North Battleford and several local businesses, including Innovation Credit Union, stepping up to help support the team's run to the Centennial Cup.

Junior hockey is only successful with great community support and we certainly have that in The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating the Battlefords North Stars on their SJHL championship and wish them the best as they represent Saskatchewan on the national stage. Thank you.

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

Fire in the Kitchen Cook-Off

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, a few weeks back I had the privilege of attending the hottest event of the year, the annual Fire in the Kitchen cook-off, hosted by the Saskatchewan Professional Firefighters and Paramedics Association. Once a year, crews of firefighters and paramedics from all across the province gather for a cook-off to see who can serve up the best appetizer, entree, and dessert, and they're doing it all for a great cause. Proceeds go to SPFFPA [Saskatchewan Professional Firefighters and Paramedics Association] burn fund to support treatment for burn victims and support for their families.

This year on April 1st, they all gathered in Saskatoon at TCU

Place, serving up food, fun, and laughs. Now we already knew that these folks are heroes, but now it turns out they can cook as well. I checked in with the panel of judges, including Eastview resident, Coach Tom Sargeant from the Saskatoon Hilltops, and he said the food was excellent.

Mr. Speaker, paramedics and firefighters have been working past their limits for years now, keeping people alive through the opioid crisis and rushing to help people in their greatest time of need. We can't even know how many lives they've saved and how many lives they've changed when they're on the job. But even off the job, these firefighters and paramedics give back to their communities through volunteerism and events like Fire in the Kitchen.

I'd like to congratulate the winning team from Prince Albert and the runners-up from Moose Jaw. And I hope all members will join me in thanking the firefighters and paramedics of Saskatchewan, and I hope to see you all at next year's cook-off.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland.

Hunter's Eastview Bowl Recognized for Support of Special Olympians

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to share with the House a great story of generosity in my own community by two individuals that I have come to know quite well.

During the winter months, my daughter Courtney bowls weekly at Hunter's Eastview Bowl, organized by Special Olympics Saskatoon. The owners of Hunter's Bowling Centre in Saskatoon, Allison Hunter and Derek Reimer, have been long-time supporters of the Special Olympics, but last Saturday made me proud to be a Saskatoon resident. Allison and Derek rented out the Galaxy movie theatre and invited all the Saturday Special Olympic bowlers to an exclusive showing of the movie *Champions*. This is a movie about a former minor league basketball coach learning to manage a team of Special Olympians.

I'm very thankful for the kindness of Allison and Derek they have shown the Special Olympic athletes of Saskatoon who utilize our facilities. The Hunter family has long been associated with bowling in Saskatoon and well known for their community support. This event was a great way to celebrate the teamwork that we have seen throughout the bowling season, reminding us of the Special Olympic motto: "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't let this act of generosity go unnoticed, so I thought it'd be fitting to recognize Allison and Derek in the House today for all they do every Saturday for all the Special Olympians. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Moose Hide Campaign Day

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is Moose Hide

Campaign Day, an Indigenous-led movement of men and boys and all Canadians to come together and help end violence against women and children. The campaign began more than 10 years ago and is another step on our collective journey of reconciliation.

Founders Paul Lacerte and his daughter Raven were hunting moose on their Carrier territory along an isolated stretch of Highway 16 in northern BC [British Columbia]. It is known as the Highway of Tears, a place where far too many women have gone missing or have been murdered. Mr. Lacerte wanted his daughter to have a life filled with dignity and respect, one free from violence, and this grassroots movement was born. It has grown each year, and to date more than three million pins have been distributed throughout Canada. Wearing the Moose Hide pin demonstrates our commitment to honour, respect, and protect the women and children in our lives, and to speak out against gender-based violence and domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, this is a day to connect, learn, and share. There are many ways to show our support. We can start by wearing the pin and visiting the Moose Hide Campaign website to learn how we can make a difference. There is no place for any form of violence in our province and country. And we thank the Moose Hide Campaign for their work and advocacy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Support for Ukrainian Post-Secondary Students in Saskatchewan

Mr. Bonk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government remains committed to supporting Ukrainian citizens who have come to Saskatchewan seeking safety and stability. Our government appreciates the many ways that the nearly 4,000 Ukrainians who have come to our province contribute to our communities, our workforce, and our culture.

We're stepping up to help Ukrainian families who come to Canada through the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel program and are hoping to pursue post-secondary education in Saskatchewan, those graduating grade 12 this year, and those who wish to further their education.

The federal intake program does not categorize Ukrainian arrivals as refugees. As a result, those who want to pursue post-secondary education will be required to pay higher international student tuition fees.

This morning the Minister of Advanced Education announced that our government will provide funding to allow those students to pay domestic tuition at Saskatchewan institutions rather than international rates. These students deserve the chance to get an education at one of our excellent post-secondary institutions and benefit from the many opportunities available through high-quality training and rewarding careers.

Mr. Speaker, we want to give them the chance to stay here near their families and further their education without experiencing financial hardship. We hope that the many Ukrainian arrivals will become permanent residents and contribute to the growth and future of our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:30]

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Affordability and Cost of Living

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier should be acting to make life more affordable for families, for seniors, all those who are looking for some relief. But this tired and out-of-touch government isn't doing anything to address the cost of living. In fact they're making life more expensive, keeping all of the fee and tax hikes from last budget plus those from 2017 in addition to power bill hike after hike after hike. Mr. Speaker, it makes no sense.

Why isn't the Premier using any of this year's windfall revenue to give families and seniors a break on the cost of living?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we — only through the strength of our resource-based economy which is doing very well, very strong position right now — are able to provide cost-of-living affordability measures in each and every budget, of which we have spoken, to about \$2 billion each and every year.

Yesterday we had the opportunity to go through more specifically what a number of those affordability measures are. For example, for those folks that are buying their first home here in the province, \$1,050 to help them buy their first home; \$3,000 to help with the cost of tuition; \$20,000 return on that cost of tuition through the graduate retention plan of which the members opposite said they would pull away from those young people that are starting their career in this province; \$3,000 savings each and every year on their income tax bill through a number of different initiatives put forward by this government.

Not just the savings in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker, but a savings in last year's budget, a savings in next year's budget, and budgets out into the future. This government will continue to address affordability issues on behalf of the people that we represent, Saskatchewan people, each and every year far in excess of what we ever saw under an NDP government.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, every day in this House it's more and more clear how out of touch that government is with what the needs are of average people in this province. They're crystally clear focused on their own political interest, Mr. Speaker, that they are more interested in or concerned about losing more support to the member from Sask Rivers than they are about what is facing families in this province.

Let's take Saskatchewan revenue agency, Mr. Speaker. On one hand, the Finance minister says that we have to keep taxing groceries because that's what the federal Liberals do. On the other hand, we need to create a whole new tax agency to force businesses to file twice just to show Gerry Ritz that they're serious about owning the libs. It makes no sense, Mr. Speaker.

Why won't the Premier scrap this wasteful project and deliver some cost-of-living relief for the people of this province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Entertaining at the very least, Mr. Speaker. Entertaining at the very least. But I would say that this government has been crystal clear on the affordability measures that we ensure in place each and every year.

Affordability measures as I walked through — a family of four's affordability measures that they would qualify for — yesterday in great detail. Among them is \$3,000 less in income tax that that family of four would pay. They would have incentives on the first home that they would buy. And if they had attended a university, they would be able to recapture \$20,000, \$20,000 of their tuition over the next number of years, Mr. Speaker — a program, a program that the members opposite have been not crystal clear but crystal cloudy as to whether or not they would remove that program, Mr. Speaker.

So the fact of the matter is, the fact of the matter is, is this government will continue to be crystal clear on all of the initiatives that we're putting forward on behalf of the people of the province. Unlike the crystal cloudy opposition leader, Mr. Speaker, that said she would stand up to Jagmeet and Justin but most certainly can't even instruct her caucus on what the policy of the NDP is today.

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

Protection of Children in Care

Ms. Conway: — I'll give it to them, Mr. Speaker. They are pretty good at politicking, but increasingly they are failing at governing.

And the stakes are higher for some. The stakes are higher unfortunately for some than others. We're joined today by Angela Severight, a residential school survivor who I know first-hand to be good mother. Angela was mother to Stellayna, who, just like her mother, had a tough life. At just 14, Stellayna became addicted to drugs, which led her to be involved in gangs.

When Angela went to the ministry, asking the government for help, she was told the only way the ministry could help would be to take Stellayna into care. Feeling she had no other choice, Angela agreed to put her daughter in the ministry's care.

But she didn't get care from this government, Mr. Speaker. At age 14 Stellayna died by drug overdose. What does the minister have to say to Angela about the ministry's failure to keep Stellayna safe?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a very serious matter and we of course, with the ministry and myself, take this very seriously and of course offer condolences to any in Saskatchewan who lose a child, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately the current legislation prohibits me from speaking directly about situations of this matter. But, Mr. Speaker, in terms

of child and family, we've been able to increase the budget every year to help with these cases, including this budget, more caseworkers, Mr. Speaker. And that is some of the things we're being able to do.

We work with the Advocate for Children and Youth. Some of her recommendations have come forward and we're working on those. In terms of the most recent report, we've committed to do a review of several of the recommendations that she's put forward, including the PSI [person of sufficient interest] care model, Mr. Speaker, in terms of investigations that's taken very seriously again by the government. Thank you.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, Angela is joined today by Bonnie Ford, who worked at the street workers' advocacy project for a total of 25 years. On April 28th of last year, Bonnie went looking for Stellayna and found her in a trap house in serious distress.

Bonnie immediately went to Stellayna's worker at the Ministry of Social Services to tell them Stellayna was in danger. No one went looking for Stellayna for 29 days. A month later, on May 29th, Stellayna died by overdose in the very house where Bonnie had initially found her and asked the ministry to go get her.

The Children's Advocate has reviewed what happened in this failure, as the minister said. Will the minister meet with Angela to discuss the advocate's recommendations? And what does he have to say about the ministry's total failure to keep Stellayna safe?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Again, Mr. Speaker, I can't speak to specifics about cases. I know within our legislation it prohibits me from doing that.

However I know there is a process that the ministry takes to ensure that there is a thorough investigation and to determine what happened in different cases. That information is shared with the advocate as well as the coroner's service, and then some information is in fact shared with the family if requested. That is different from several other provinces, in my understanding, who share absolutely nothing with family members.

So Mr. Speaker, we've been able to increase supports, as I mentioned before: \$54 million in prevention programs. The operation oversight unit was created. It's being staffed. It's had increases this year, Mr. Speaker. So we have many children in care in this province, Mr. Speaker, and our case workers certainly do their best as situations arise.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the minister didn't respond to my question about whether he'd meet with Angela. I'd like him to respond to that question.

Mr. Speaker, Bonnie called what happened to Stellayna the largest social services failure she's ever seen, and she's seen a

lot, Mr. Speaker. And we know there are serious systemic issues with our broken child welfare system. Stellayna's death wasn't a one-off. It was a systemic failure by this 16-year-old government that has continuously failed to keep kids safe, to curb the drug overdose crisis, to provide adequate supports to struggling families, to address the high number of children that die or have serious injury in care, to bring in a child death review committee, to address burnout and crushing caseloads in the ministry.

What will the minister do to fix this broken system?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, I ran out of time in the last question. I'd be happy to meet with anyone, and anyone with this specific case of course but anyone who has suggestions on how we can work on this.

Certainly I'd point to this year's budget. We were able to increase 24 positions, six of those oversight for group homes and child and family, but also 18 more workers, Mr. Speaker. So absolutely. And my understanding is with the new credential requirement for those 18 positions, Mr. Speaker, that we're having some success in there. It's difficult to recruit B.S.W.s [Bachelor of Social Work] to child and family. It is a challenging file. And this is the case right across Canada, in my understanding.

So we're doing our best. And in this budget we had some measures. And last year we invested \$51 million to the CBO [community-based organization] sector. We've increased that substantially.

More answers if there's more questions.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of meeting Angela years ago and seeing how she fought for her daughter. She took Stellayna to detox two, three times. She did this to keep her safe. And after Bonnie found Stellayna, Angela went down to the courthouse trying to get Stellayna into youth detox again to keep her alive. But Angela was told she couldn't do that because the ministry was now standing in the place of the parent. And the ministry failed to act . . . Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Angela was given no choice but to put Stellayna in care, and then the tools that she had available to her to keep Stellayna safe were not available to her. Stellayna was therefore at greater risk of harm in ministry care. It's tragic and it makes no sense.

So much has to change. Where would the minister start?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, again, a complex file. And we're working in this budget and several budgets past. I note a new child and family services Act, which we have amendments that we discussed in committee, Mr. Speaker. We hope that can help move things along, Mr. Speaker.

But in terms of some of the investments, Mr. Speaker, last year

the Ministry of Social Services provided 56.8 million to Indigenous service providers, First Nations agencies. 363 million has been allocated to child and family services, a substantial increase since 2007. Again, new group homes within this budget, operational oversight.

There are several programs that we have in terms of helping folks and preventative measures to keep families together. We've supported family living programs. We have several family support programs that we rely on our awesome CBOs to help us with. We have several intensive direct supports, counselling, teen parent support, intensive in-home support, respite services, Mr. Speaker. And we always do reviews to see where we can do better.

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

Provision of Information on the Health Care System

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday during Premier's estimates, the Premier committed to providing the number of times that a person in Saskatchewan called for an ambulance but no ambulance was available. This is information that the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] has on hand in its system. Shouldn't have taken more than a couple of hours to track it down, put those numbers into a table. Can the Minister of Health update the House with a number on how many times Saskatchewan people were told "no" when they needed an ambulance?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My team's been gathering that information, and we'll submit it to the House by the end of the day today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, we know that in just the first six weeks of this year, there were 216 times that a Saskatchewan person called, in their greatest time of need, and no help was available. People shouldn't have to rely on FOIs [freedom of information], leaked internal documents, or legislative committees to get basic information about the state of our health care system.

We shouldn't hear about four ICUs [intensive care unit] being on bypass at the same time because of a leaked internal dashboard. The government should make that information available on the internet. Today, if you have the right link to the website, that kind of information is only available for facilities in Saskatoon. Why won't the minister make that information available for every hospital in Saskatchewan?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And yes, this information is available for Saskatoon. I have asked the SHA to

make sure that that information is available for Regina as well, as requested by the committee, Mr. Speaker.

But what I can say is we have increased our ICU capacity, Mr. Speaker. We have 10 high-acuity beds in Regina. Now we have 10 high-acuity beds. These are the beds that are just sub the ICU, Mr. Speaker, to be able to make sure that people are getting their care but not at an ICU level.

We've also increased the number from 79 up to 85 with an investment from this government, post-pandemic, to be able to increase that. We're looking at increasing that again, Mr. Speaker. We've made a commitment on that, and we're going to follow through. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, I'm old enough to remember when the Sask Party campaigned on being the most open and the most transparent government in the history of Saskatchewan, but now they're sending hush memos to staff, and they won't even put basic information on the website about hospitals in our province.

The culture of secrecy of this tired and out-of-touch government has created isn't just bad for transparency; it's bad for patient care. When someone needs to go to the hospital, they should be able to see if the ER [emergency room] is going to be open when they arrive. Again, why won't the minister put the information for all of our hospitals up on the SHA website today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I've identified, this was something done previous in Saskatoon under the old health region. And we're working on amalgamation of a lot of procedures, Mr. Speaker, and processes through other areas of the province. I've asked the SHA to look into this to make sure it's updated in Regina.

In rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, it's very challenging because somebody could be on bypass . . . a facility could be on bypass because a shift couldn't come in, because somebody couldn't make it, they weren't able to get to work. And then five minutes later, Mr. Speaker, we can have that.

What I would ask people, if they are curious or if they are needing to know what exactly their situation is in their specific area, to call 811, be triaged by the RNs [registered nurse] that are dealing at 811, and they'll be able to direct them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Support for Forestry Businesses

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Tuesday the government announced it was supporting the forestry industry by improving northern highways. Mr. Speaker, we have a guest in the House whose family have been in the forestry industry for generations. Unfortunately this current government has created roadblocks, red tape, bureaucracy to the point where the Matton

family doesn't know how much longer they can stay in the industry. As a result, Mr. Matton's business is struggling to supply the remaining loyal Saskatchewan customers.

Mr. Speaker, is pushing generational foresters out of the industry part of this government's growth that works for everyone? Will the government meet with the Mattons today?

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I welcome the Mattons to their Legislative Assembly. I'd be pleased to meet with them after question period in just a few minutes. I don't know the details of the concerns they're having but, Mr. Speaker, I understand they recently met with the member from Carrot River Valley. I'll invite him to the meeting as well, and if I can do something to help coordinate with officials in Environment, certainly we'll do that, Mr. Speaker.

The forest industry is incredibly important to the province of Saskatchewan. It's the largest industry in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I believe it employs about 8,000 people. The future is bright for the forestry industry, Mr. Speaker. Part of our growth for 2030 plan is to double the size of the forestry industry.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would be happy to meet with the Mattons after question period.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a few years that the Matton family has been fighting this struggle. They didn't have to come here today, if the government would have listened to them. So the government clearly doesn't understand what they are doing to small businesses. These are hard times and moved . . . The red tape is only making the problem harder. We are seeing the government work against small businesses by stepping in and dictating operations and procedures when the government should be strictly oversight.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to meeting with the Matton family to discuss the difficulties? And why didn't they meet with him years ago? Because the industry and the work that this family has been doing for years . . . Why did it have to take today for you finally to meet the Matton family?

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, just because the member has a question written down doesn't mean she has to read it again. I indicated twice in my previous answer that I would meet with the Matton family, and I will, Mr. Speaker.

I find it ironic, Mr. Speaker, that she's criticizing that somehow we don't do enough for small business. Mr. Speaker, small businesses never had a better friend in government than this government. We've made great efforts to cut red tape, Mr. Speaker. We frequently meet with small business.

And specific to small business in the forestry industry, Mr. Speaker, I find it ironic that she's saying, why didn't they meet with them years ago? I guess she might want to look in the mirror and ask that question because she was the Legislative Secretary for forestry.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was there when the Sask Party first formed government. They were a new party, and they were for the little guy. How far they have fallen. Our former premier Brad Wall stood up for the small-business owners. They stood up for farmers. They stood up for forestry, for hard-working families. This current Premier is nothing like his predecessor. His government has abandoned the people that were once so proud of this government.

Today Mr. Matton and so many others like him . . . This government has become an oppressor of the small entrepreneurs. Mr. Speaker, this is not the Sask Party that I was once proud to represent. This Premier and his government should be ashamed. You should be ashamed of what you've become and what you've done to the people.

Mr. Speaker, will this government change course and stand up for the hard-working men and women of the province . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, that's absolutely ridiculous. Nobody in this country has done more for business than that Premier, Mr. Speaker. For that member to have the audacity to quote Brad Wall from the past, Mr. Speaker . . . I've served under two amazing premiers, Mr. Speaker. She's quoting Brad Wall. I'm going to paraphrase a quote from many years ago in a presidential debate, Mr. Speaker: I know Brad Wall. Brad Wall is a friend of mine. You're no Brad Wall.

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

Role of Parents in Education

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we've been talking about education this week. I've gone through the Education minister's framework for provincial education for 2020-2030. It talks about stakeholders. It talks about partners, organizations, unions, boards, and non-students, but not once, not once does it mention or recognize parents.

Mr. Speaker, parents are the most important educators in their children's lives. The government has a duty to recognize them as such in their strategic planning. This is an insulting, obvious omission by this government and by the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Speaker, will this government and that minister correct their failure, their failure to recognize parents as the primary educator of their children? Will this government apologize to parents for failing even to mention or acknowledge their seat at the table in the framework of provincial education?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly when we have worked to develop our new plan to take us to 2030, it does include four pillars. A part of that, one of those plans, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that we do have an education system that does instill in our students the knowledge, the skills, and the character for them to be able to succeed today and into the future, Mr. Speaker.

One of those pillars speaks specifically to creating pathways for students to be able to find a future life for themselves, preferably in this province, Mr. Speaker. And it does specifically reference not only working with students but also with their families, Mr. Speaker. It's right there in the document. I think it's the second pillar of the four pillars, right in the document.

Of course we believe that families, that parents are important to their children, Mr. Speaker. I would say that for myself, Mr. Speaker. We have great teachers in this province, but I would say that my wife and I as parents to our three children, we're the most important people in our children's lives, Mr. Speaker. And so we will support families to be a part of their children's education.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Enhancements to Pathway for Licensing Internationally Educated Nurses

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be sharing some exciting news today that will strengthen and expand health care human resources across our entire system. When the Minister of Rural and Remote Health and I travelled throughout the province last summer talking directly to nurses on the front line, we heard the message repeatedly: we need more nurses. Today's announcement marks another key step in our aggressive plan to bring them that help.

Strengthening our health human resources remains a top priority for our government. In the '23-24 budget we committed an overall investment of nearly \$100 million across government to support a health human resources action plan to recruit, train, incentivize, and retain more health care workers and physicians.

We continue to make great progress in delivering our strategies to grow our health care system in ways that work for everyone. Saskatchewan is the first province to introduce a streamlined and accelerated training, assessment, and licensing pathway for internationally educated nurses last fall. We have since hosted two successful missions to the Philippines, recruiting nearly 400 conditional offers to Filipino registered nurses. These nurses are qualified and prepared to come join our workforce.

I am pleased to share with you today that further enhancements to this pathway are in development. I'd like to thank the nursing partners and regulators, along with post-secondary institutions, for their collaborative efforts on this important work. On behalf of the ministries of Health, Advanced Education, and Immigration and Career Training, I'm pleased to announce that Saskatchewan will be introducing further pathway reforms for internationally educated nurses.

We plan to reduce licensing time frames and simplify complex regulatory programs by offering a more streamlined process. This new, simplified, and even more efficient pathway will offer flexible options for nurses waiting to enter the provincial health care workforce. This will allow qualified international educated nurses in good standing to join our provincial health care system at a much faster rate. It will deliver the help and resources we require while maintaining patient safety and a high quality of care.

Working closely with our partners, our government is moving forward to replace the nine-month bridging program with a more focused skills training and orientation in health care settings to provide international educated nurses with solid grounding in a shorter period of time. Timelines for international educated nurses in good standing . . . and will qualify to join our workforce, will be significantly reduced in the months and weeks to come.

By creating a safe and balanced approach to licensing and integration into the workforce that works for Saskatchewan, we build and strengthen the foundation of our health care workforce.

The advantage of our new approach includes reducing the amount of time needed for licensing; increasing the number of licensed nurses available to work in Saskatchewan; and reducing overall education bridging process timelines for international educated nurses in good standing from months to weeks; providing flexibility by expanding the options available to recognize English-language proficiency requirements. This new pathway will be in place in the coming months.

Our government has introduced a service of health system navigators to assist international educated nurses through the system and provide tailored one-on-one support through the pathway to licensing. Our province will continue to lead Canadian jurisdictions in attracting health care workers. With robust settlement programs already in place, Saskatchewan will continue to be a preferred destination for international educated nurses looking to join our workforce.

[11:00]

Saskatchewan is a great place to choose to build a career in the health care field. Saskatchewan also provides the opportunity to build a life for yourself and your family. We have excellent supports and initiatives for internationally trained health care professionals interested in coming to work and raise their families in Saskatchewan. There are also significant employment opportunities in Saskatchewan for family members who work outside our health care system.

Today's announcement isn't just about international educated nurses. It's also about the dedicated and valued nurses who have been working tirelessly throughout the health care system right now. These additional resources will assist our hard-working health care professionals who are in our health system now, so they don't have to work as much overtime and they will have the ability to have a work-life balance that works for them.

I look forward to the future announcements in expanding our health care system. Together we will continue to grow our province and find ways to benefit patients, our valued health care

system, and the entire system.

In closing, in celebrating National Nursing Week, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to our nurses who deliver high quality of care every day in our system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for providing his remarks in advance. And I'll begin by saying that there's much in his statement that we can absolutely find common ground and agreement with. In particular we absolutely recognize on both sides of this Assembly, as most people in Saskatchewan see very clearly, the need for more nurses in our province. There's no doubt about that. That fact isn't debated here. We need more nurses and health care workers.

We saw evidence of this last summer in Saskatchewan when there were, in just one week, 37 different facilities that were closed, mostly due to short-staffing. And many of those facilities were closed due to a shortage of nurses in Saskatchewan, RNs and LPNs [licensed practical nurse].

I think of the hospital in Kamsack that went from 20 beds down to 10, down to 5, and eventually to zero and then a restriction of emergency services. They're trying to gain back some of those services, but of course one of the things making that difficult is the availability of nurses in Saskatchewan.

So Saskatchewan people recognize this and they feel the effects of short-staffing. And so we'd certainly agree that anything we can do to attract nurses — whether they are trained here in Canada, in Saskatchewan, or internationally educated — we agree that that's important. But something else that's important is the retention of our health care workers.

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses is raising the alarm about the outflow of experienced nurses, those who have worked in the profession for years or maybe decades, who are leaving the workforce due to the pressures on the job that they can't keep up with and the lack of support coming from this provincial government.

I will note that the Minister of Rural and Remote Health detailed his retention strategy in committee earlier in this session and said that his strategy to health care workers to stay working in our province is to simply show up and do what they're paid to do. We don't think that that's adequate, and I know that the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses has raised concern over what they hear from their members who are considering leaving the profession or leaving the province to work elsewhere. And we believe that this needs to be addressed at the same time that we are recruiting internationally trained nurses from elsewhere.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the minister in celebrating national nurses week, and I'd thank all of our nurses who continue to serve our province so well in hospitals and community clinics, in long-term care, in schools, and so much more.

But I also want to note that a good way that this minister could show his thanks to those nurses is by picking up the phone,

calling the president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, Tracy Zambory, and saying yes to her call for a nursing task force that can start to solve all of those issues that we see not only in recruitment but in retention of our valued health care workers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Affordability and Cost of Living

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On my feet lots today, which I'm happy to do because we've got a lot to say. And I want to say, yesterday we heard from our leader who did such a fantastic job during Premier's estimates on bringing forward the concerns that we hear from Saskatchewan people all the time.

You know, we hear it when we're at the grocery store. We hear it when we're out for a meal with our families or colleagues, like we were yesterday and heard from folks who were telling us that they're happy to see that we're bringing forward the real things that are impacting people's lives in this province.

And I think one of those top concerns, along with concerns of health care and transparency that we heard today, along with failures in social services and education and all sorts of things, top of mind for so many Saskatchewan people is the cost-of-living crisis. So at the conclusion of my remarks, I will be putting forward a motion:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to use windfall revenues to provide cost-of-living relief for Saskatchewan families.

We're bringing forward this motion today, that I'll move at the conclusion of my comments, because we think that this is such an important issue for Saskatchewan families. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that we've seen, you know, recent reports . . . Let me say, it's something that we don't really need to read in the news and to see surveys from. We hear this all the time, as I mentioned, when we're out, when folks come into our offices. When folks walk into my office at Market Mall in Saskatoon, we hear about the tough decisions that they've got to make to make ends meet, folks making really tough decisions over what they can afford week to week or month to month.

But we also have studies. We also have polls that tell us that 55 per cent of Saskatchewan people are worse off financially this year compared to a year ago. That should concern this government. It certainly concerns us, and that's why we've raised this issue nearly every day of this sitting in the Assembly over the last nine weeks.

We also know that Saskatchewan has some of the highest rates of mortgage insolvency and arrears, that folks are on that cusp of being in really difficult situations in terms of being able to afford the homes that they live in, the place that they're raising their children, maybe the place that they have been living for years or decades, and they're facing difficult situations. This is a fact.

We know that Saskatchewan has some of the highest rates of food bank usage in the country. We have, I believe, the second-highest rates of childhood poverty in the country. We know that affording life in Saskatchewan has been especially hard under this Sask Party government's tenure, but it's getting worse.

And we know that that cost-of-living crisis has a big impact on people, has a big impact on our kids. Ask any teacher, probably I would venture to say in any community, whether it's rural or urban, public or Catholic. They know that children come to school hungry. I don't know why members opposite are heckling me as I talk about hungry children in this province.

An Hon. Member: — Because you just said every teacher. And I just talked to some.

Mr. Love: — Okay. I said teachers in every community. But go ahead and keep chirping away over there as I talk about hungry children in our province. We have kids coming to class who experience food insecurity in the home. This cost-of-living crisis is absolutely having impact on our children. Children who, you know, maybe grow up in homes where parents are struggling to make ends meet. They often know about that. Children feel that pressure. They wear that stress too, even at young ages.

I remember growing up. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I grew up in a single parent home. I grew up with a mom raising three boys. And I was aware of those challenges from a young age. And we look at the situation today, and we can't kid ourselves that our kids aren't experiencing this in their mental health and their physical health when parents are struggling financially.

Mr. Speaker, we know that families are bearing the impact of this cost-of-living crisis when parents are working two or more jobs and still having to stop at the food bank on the way home. We know that parents are making tough calls about what they can afford and what they can provide, and that the impact of that is, I think, beyond what many of us in this Assembly know and experience day to day. But it's upon us to listen to the folks and to represent their views here in their Assembly.

We know that this cost-of-living crisis has an impact on older adults as well, on seniors, seniors who I hear from all the time because the area around my office has some of the highest seniors' population of any community in all of Canada. And so I have folks come into my office all the time talking about the struggles that they have month to month, deciding between paying the bills or buying food. And when we have seniors who helped build this province making these tough decisions, we've got to give our head a shake and look at what our priorities are in this Assembly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk about responsibility for this crisis. And in fairness to this government and I think all governments, you know, I want to say that there are global forces here driving the price of everything. There's inflationary pressures that the governments all around the world are experiencing. By no means am I putting that responsibility on this provincial government, but I do hold them responsible for responding to this crisis.

We can't deny the facts, but how do we respond to this crisis? And it's been crystal clear that the response from the Sask Party

government has been one of making things worse for families, for seniors, for people in this province. It's been one of offering no urgent supports, and in fact making things more difficult. And I think that we see the effects of that across this province.

I want to talk about a few ways, through my time today, Mr. Speaker, that . . . And I'll get back to some of those 32 tax and fee increases from last year's budget as this cost-of-living crisis was really ramping up. This isn't new. This was absolutely present at the time of last year's budget and yet they brought forward 32 new tax and fee increases. Did they do anything to diminish the impact of those on Saskatchewan families this year? No, not at all. I'll get back to some of those later in my time, if I've got time.

But I want to talk about a couple of areas that often go overlooked in what has been driving this cost-of-living crisis and I want to try and connect the dots a little bit. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has failed to provide adequate funding for education for over a decade and there are impacts on this in the classroom. And we talk about the impacts in the classroom — students going without the supports that they need; teachers burning out and leaving the profession. We've talked about that but one of the impacts of underfunding education is actually on the pocketbooks of parents and families.

And I want to share a few stories about how this failure to adequately fund education is impacting Saskatchewan people. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when this government fails to fund education, they offload the cost and difficult decisions to school divisions. And school divisions are left to make, year after year, decisions to cut, make cuts in the classroom. This eventually makes its way to the families that those divisions serve. We know that families and teachers are often left to pick up that cost.

We saw several years ago, school divisions — and including up to last year and maybe again this year in Regina school divisions — making decisions to charge families lunch hour supervision fees when they have nowhere else to cut because they describe the system has been cut to the bone. They have to find a way to offload that cost and so they pass it on to families. Who can blame them? There's nowhere else to cut. They don't want to cut any more teachers, any more support staff. There's nowhere left to go but to pass that cost on. This is a failure of provincial funding for education that's impacting families in a generational cost-of-living crisis.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I talked to a working parent just last week, a working parent with children in the public system here in Regina. And this individual detailed for me how much it's costing his family when his child doesn't get the supports that they need in school. This child is in a class, well over 30 students, with a phenomenal teacher, with a teacher that the family is full of respect for and appreciation, but they know that their child, especially coming out of the COVID pandemic, has some gaps in his learning. And so they've had to . . . Because those supports aren't available in the school system due to this government's underfunding, they are now paying for extra tutoring out of pocket.

[11:15]

Many families have experienced this across Saskatchewan. Their

children, who they love and would go to any length to give those children what they need, families are now paying out of pocket because of this government's failures to fund education adequately. And all of this during a generational cost-of-living crisis.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we hear from families all the time who have to pay for maybe a private ed psych assessment because the wait is simply too long in our underfunded education system. Families who pursue private speech-language pathologists because the wait is too long and the supports in our public and separate schools, who can only, can only lean on the budgets that they get from this government. Systems that are described as cut to the bone leaves parents in a situation where they have nowhere else to go but to pay out of pocket for those supports. So when this government fails, fails to adequately fund education, they are passing that on to parents to pay for, again, during a generational cost-of-living crisis.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to talk about the impact of failures in health care. We know that when this government, as they've been doing so much over the last number of years, have just a laundry list of failures in health care. Not only is that impacting the care that people receive when somebody calls for an ambulance and they can't get one, when they get to an ER and there's, you know, a hundred people waiting for care, absolutely their health care needs are top of mind, but there's also financial implications for this.

We know that when folks are driving past shuttered ERs and hospitals to find help or driving between communities only to get there and find out that there's no care available, there's a massive cost to that for folks.

And we can't minimize how much that is hurting people in their bottom lines when they're driving all around this province maybe to visit a loved one in long-term care. I heard from an individual recently who had a loved one in long-term care in Regina who's being moved hours away, and there's a big cost for the families to get there. This is a failure in health care that's costing families bottom lines.

We also can look at the massive surgical backlog, and what is this government's solution but to send Saskatchewan residents to Alberta for care in private clinics. Now we can debate the health care choice, you know, in here. And we do. But we can't debate the massive cost for folks who need health care, to say that it's okay to ask them to drive to Alberta to stay maybe for several days in a hotel, to pay for food. We're talking thousands of dollars to get the care that they need. It's absolutely inappropriate.

And this government's failures and the cost-of-living crisis go far beyond their tax and fee increases. It goes far beyond, you know, the biggest tax increases that this province has ever seen when they've added PST [provincial sales tax] onto things like construction labour and restaurant meals and children's clothes and even food that families depend on, as we've learned this week in the Assembly. The taxes that they've added on without realizing how much that hurts a family. Families who are rushing between activities, families who are trying to make sure that there's healthy food in their kids' lunches when they go school. And that this government has applied those new taxes onto the

food and the groceries that busy families like mine, and like thousands around this province, depend on. It's a failure in this cost-of-living crisis, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's one that this government has taken no action on.

So we are calling on this government to use the windfall revenue, not to save it up for the next election, to come in like they tried to do in the Meewasin by-election. The need is now. In fact the need is well over a year old. And the actions from this government have been a complete failure to address the needs of this time.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to stand in my place and to put forward this motion:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to use windfall revenues to provide cost-of-living relief for Saskatchewan families.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Saskatoon Eastview:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to use windfall revenues to provide cost-of-living relief for Saskatchewan families.

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

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you to the opposition members for putting forth this motion on the rising cost of living.

The elephant in the cost-of-living room is the carbon tax. One of the largest reasons we are seeing an increase in the cost of living is the carbon tax, or as I like to call it, a tax on everything. A tax on everything that has automatic annual increases scheduled year after year.

In addition to the carbon tax, Steven Guilbeault throws out the idea of a social cost on carbon. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this social cost on carbon is not just a drop in the bucket for taxpayers. It's a torrential downpour on the people of Saskatchewan. He has pegged the social cost on carbon at \$247 per tonne.

According to the member from Saskatoon Nutana, the need for a carbon tax is not up for debate any longer. Not up for debate? Is she suggesting the hard-working people of Saskatchewan must bow down to the federal government's carbon tax and accept it as the main driver in the high cost of living? I think not. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan cannot afford the NDP opposition support for their leader Jagmeet, and Jagmeet's support of Trudeau and the federal carbon tax.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, carbon tax, or the tax on everything, is impacting Saskatchewan families directly in their own homes. The cost of heating their homes and powering their appliances continues to increase. An average residential customer in Saskatchewan will pay \$390 this year in carbon tax charges for natural gas. The carbon tax and GST [goods and services tax] on the carbon tax will make up 27 per cent of the average residential

customer's bill this year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this unnecessary carbon tax is placing undue hardships on Saskatchewan families. The burden of increasing carbon tax is affecting how parents can provide the basic necessities for their family. The Jagmeet-Justin coalition government said that people would get back more money than they would pay in carbon tax. The parliamentary budget officer just came out and confirmed, confirmed what people already knew, that the fact they will not get back what they pay in carbon tax. Shocking.

The member from Saskatoon Nutana, supporting her leader Jagmeet and Steven Guilbeault, was quoted as saying, "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." Mr. Deputy Speaker, carbon tax, making living unaffordable for everyone.

The member for Saskatoon Nutana didn't stop there. She also said, "We don't think of the carbon tax as a tax. This is a price on pollution, and a necessary one." Carbon tax, making living unaffordable for everyone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only is the carbon tax increasing costs in households, but it also impacts our small and large businesses, making the cost of producing goods and services more expensive. Our Saskatchewan-based industries are forced to compete internationally with companies that do not have to pay a carbon tax, giving foreign companies an unfair advantage to our businesses and employers. Producing goods under a carbon tax regime places people and business at a disadvantage. They are not being measured by the same measuring stick.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I love watching horse races, in particular the Kentucky Derby. People from around the world come to watch all the pomp and pageantry surrounding a two-minute race. That's incredible. Owners and trainers come from all over the world to compete for the chance to win the Run for the Roses. This year the winning horse was Mage. Congratulations to everyone involved with developing this horse into the athlete he is.

I'm not sure if everyone knows some of the details leading up to the race itself. The owner or owners hire a trainer to grow their horse into a competitive athlete. Together the owner and trainer hire a jockey to ride their horse. Horse racing is a huge gambling enterprise, not only in the United States, but in many countries.

To ensure the race is fair and equal for all competitors, jockeys are individually weighed to verify they are within the assigned weight. If the jockey comes in too light, weights will be added to ensure each racehorse is carrying a similar load. Seems fair for everyone. It places everyone on a level playing field.

Not once have the rule makers ever considered adding extra weight, weight above the defined weight, to a horse that may be from any, say, country — maybe Canada. That would place our Canadian horse at a huge disadvantage and unlikely to win said race or even allow them to continue to compete in future races. That's a very sad story, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Why would the member from Nutana and the NDP continue to support Justin and Jagmeet's carbon tax? Why would they continue to place an unfair burden on the people and companies that are competing in world markets, companies and people in other countries that are running a race without the additional weight burden of a carbon tax? Investors will not bet on a horse that carries more weight than its competitors. As an export-reliant province, the carbon tax will continue to negatively impact our economy and the people that live and work right here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's turn back to the carbon tax and how it impacts our province and the people of Saskatchewan. Just as a reminder to the opposition, Saskatchewan is geographically a large province with a population scattered from end to end. Residents need to travel long distances for living, working, and for pleasure. Carbon tax makes living, going to work, and going on vacation more expensive.

While I said we are an exporting province we also like to import tourists, tourists that will come and enjoy the many scenic sights Saskatchewan has to offer. While people plan and budget a vacation, they will consider the cost of their vacation destination. We need to remain cost-competitive and encourage tourists to visit our great province. Carbon tax makes travelling costly.

I've already mentioned the additional costs to heat and power our homes. These additional heating and power costs also impact our long-term care homes, hospitals, schools, and post-secondary institutions. And I did not even mention all the increased transportation costs with the people working and utilizing these services. Increased costs are clearly attributed to the increasing carbon tax. Capital investment and construction costs increased due to the carbon tax. Refer back to my Canadian racehorse carrying the additional unnecessary weight.

Our Saskatchewan farmers are also carrying the carbon tax burden, growing crops to feed the world. Value-added agriculture is also carrying the carbon tax burden, disadvantaging our businesses in a world market. Transportation costs for getting our exports to market continue to increase due to the carbon tax. Resource developers, including potash companies that are mining fertilizer to help farmers feed and growing the population are also bearing the carbon tax burden.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan and the businesses from Saskatchewan want and need to run a race without the additional weight of a carbon tax. They need to reduce the cost of living for families by eliminating the carbon tax. The most effective way to reduce SaskPower and SaskEnergy rates would be to eliminate said carbon tax. Even though Saskatchewan has the second-lowest utility bundle in the country, families would benefit from eliminating the burden of the carbon tax. Providing cost-of-living relief would be best accomplished by eliminating this burden of the carbon tax.

I ask the opposition to demand that their leader, Jagmeet, withdraw his support of Justin's minority government if they do not immediately make living and working in Saskatchewan and Canada more affordable by immediately eliminating the carbon tax.

[11:30]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government has worked hard to lower the cost of living for Saskatchewan families. Let's take a typical family of four with \$75,000 in annual income between two partners. Back in 2007, under the NDP, that couple paid just over \$5,000 in income tax. But when the Saskatchewan Party took office, we raised the personal exemption. We raised the spousal exemption. We raised the child exemption. We lowered the income tax rates, and every year we index all those exemptions and tax brackets. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I'm pleased to enter into this debate because it's just so important to the people of Saskatchewan who are facing such terrible hardship, Mr. Speaker. And they deserve action on this front.

They deserve recognition of the reality that they live, the extraordinary costs that they face from an extraordinary situation, Mr. Speaker, and a once-in-a-generation cost-of-living challenge that Saskatchewan families and people are enduring, and a government that's so darned out of touch, Mr. Speaker, that they're actually making things worse during this period of time instead of using the resources and the revenues that have been provided, the bounty on this front, the windfall on this front because of that same set of extraordinary circumstances, bounty for government to deliver some savings and some affordability and some relief for Saskatchewan people.

Now before I get going, I got a kick out of the member from Cannington who got going about horse racing through his remarks, Mr. Speaker. And I didn't hear exactly what thread he was weaving there with respect to the horse racing, Mr. Speaker, but you know, it got me thinking about how it's that government over there that actually killed the horse-racing industry in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, a horse-racing industry that's a heritage industry in Saskatchewan, one that stitches together pride in prairie towns and our history and Indigenous communities and Indigenous peoples, Mr. Speaker, and something that was done in by that Sask Party government.

And you know, that industry is an important industry to many in this province, a proud industry to many, as well as dollars and cents for local communities. I think of what it meant of course up in Saskatoon. I know what it meant out in Yorkton, just in such an amazing region. And I know what it meant here in Regina. And I got to know the entrepreneurs here in Regina, the horse people that put together that track on the west side of Regina, Mr. Speaker, out by the boondoggle that is the GTH [Global Transportation Hub].

But that horse-racing operation, Mr. Speaker, it was put together with private dollars and a whole lot of pride, and it was quite the event. And it brought together a wonderful environment for people to come together. It was fun. Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed being out there. But I also saw the pride in the generational horse-racing families and operations from across our province, but also those that would bring horses in from all over Canada — all over Western Canada, all over Canada, up from the United States — bringing with them their dollars to invest, building our economy, Mr. Speaker. You know, it was that Sask Party government that did in those entrepreneurs, Mr. Speaker, that did in that heritage

industry in this province.

So I got a kick out of the member from Cannington referencing horse racing, Mr. Speaker, and thought we should put on the record, you know, that piece of their history, Mr. Speaker, that impacted a lot of people.

But with respect to the cost of living that people are enduring, it's just abundantly clear that this government couldn't be more out of touch with the reality that people are facing, you know. And that's a problem in itself, Mr. Speaker, to be out of touch. But I think what's worse, Mr. Speaker, is that we have a government that goes one step further. And this is where it gets downright disrespectful to the hard-working people and seniors in this province, Mr. Speaker, is that they are trying to tell people that the reality that they know, that the cost of living's been like this, Mr. Speaker, that the taxes have been like this, that the cost of food and fuel, Mr. Speaker, have been like this, that power and utilities have been like this, and that it's creating real hardship.

We have a government that try to tell Saskatchewan people that, no, the reality you know is wrong, Mr. Speaker. You know, I think what it does is it tries to twist individuals to somehow thinking that they're doing something wrong, Mr. Speaker, tries to make them feel that somehow they're the ones that are doing something wrong or that are failing here, Mr. Speaker.

What I want to say to Saskatchewan people is that you're doing all you can and more, Mr. Speaker, and we know it. We know that with the hard-working business owners that are dealing with finance costs that are going through the roof, suffering through supply chain challenges, Mr. Speaker, dealing with the high cost of power that continues to be increased by this government, the taxes that continue to be increased by this government. We know it's not easy.

And we know it's not easy to those hard-working families, Mr. Speaker. Families of all different shapes and sizes, Mr. Speaker, doing everything they can to make ends meet. Doing everything they can to keep their head above water and to pay the bills at the end of each and every month. Doing everything they can to put food in the fridge and on the table, Mr. Speaker. Doing everything they can to keep a safe roof over the heads of their children, over themselves, Mr. Speaker. When I think of our seniors, Mr. Speaker, that are subjected often to such terrible, terrible hardship economically on this front . . .

You know, we have a situation of course. We know this government has really failed economically, failed economically to ensure the good job opportunities that Saskatchewan people deserve, the paycheques that people deserve, Mr. Speaker. And then we also know that at the same time they've cranked up the cost of living and made things worse. Now there are some parts of this that are outside of our control, Mr. Speaker, but there's a lot of aspects that are directly within the control of the provincial government. And on every one of those levers, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that chose to make things harder not better, chose to make things worse, Mr. Speaker.

And I think of those hard-working families, many of them that are working two and three jobs, Mr. Speaker, full-time jobs, good jobs, jobs that they've studied for, trained for, Mr. Speaker, and then working a second job or a third job at the same time as

they're trying to extend the love and support and care that they can to their children, Mr. Speaker, and to make sure they have the opportunities they deserve as well.

So as I say, you know, it's bad enough that the members opposite are out of touch with that reality, corner to corner in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. But what's worse, Mr. Speaker, and what's downright disrespectful, is that we have a Sask Party government that insists on telling people that the reality they know, each and every day and each and every month, is wrong, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to tell those hard-working people, Mr. Speaker, that it's not them that are failing. They're doing their part and more. It's your provincial government, Mr. Speaker, that are failing you. We see it with the power increases, Mr. Speaker. We see it with the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history, everything from insurance to children's clothes to restaurants to foods we purchase in grocery stores, Mr. Speaker, to the epitome of a job-killing tax, the PST on construction labour, sticking it to used cars, Mr. Speaker, cranking up property tax for the people of the province in the last two budgets.

This is a government that has enjoyed windfall revenue for circumstances outside of their control, extraordinary events, Mr. Speaker. People though, because of the same events, Mr. Speaker, have faced incredible hardship, and we have a government that chose to make it worse.

And of course that carbon tax, you know, it makes no sense for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We'll be clear on that. We've been clear on that. We have a government that's failed to make that case, Mr. Speaker. And now we have a government that's failed in the reality that we're living in, Mr. Speaker, to provide some relief on this front.

Instead what they're doing is they're taking the federal carbon tax and now taking it over to administer it and collect that money, Mr. Speaker, with no relief for Saskatchewan people. We see that of course very clearly with SaskPower, Mr. Speaker, bringing about big hikes to the bills of Saskatchewan people — this government taking over control of collection of that carbon tax, I guess the Sask Party carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, but with no relief to the people of Saskatchewan.

No investment into those other things as well too, like energy-efficiency retrofits or renewable power working with homes and businesses and farms and municipal infrastructure in First Nations that could reduce emissions, reduce costs, Mr. Speaker, and put thousands of people to work, you know, and a government that hasn't acted on other fronts as well.

You think of the meat pricing investigation that we've been pushing for along with the livestock producers of this province, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that's failing to ensure fairness for the livestock producers of this province, Mr. Speaker, as well as consumers in this province, instead siding with the big, large out-of-province meat-packing industry, Mr. Speaker, who act in anticompetitive ways to the detriment of Saskatchewan consumers, to the detriment of our livestock industry — a livestock industry, I should say as well, that should be getting relief and compensation for their role in sequestration, Mr. Speaker, in face of that carbon tax and the role they fulfill.

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

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a privilege to be able to rise in the House today and speak to the motion that was put forward by the member from Saskatoon Eastview. And I just want to mention to him that it didn't go unnoticed that you didn't use the word "condemn." And I appreciate that. I've seen that in some of the motions in the past, "We condemn the Sask Party government," but you didn't use that word and I appreciate it.

And you know, but I do want to speak to it a little bit. Yesterday we listened to our Premier speaking about a family, and during estimates there the Leader of the Opposition had been asking certain questions and our Premier was describing a family. And while he was describing that family, I was sitting in the back here listening and thinking a lot about my own family.

And the Leader of the Opposition later on called that "imaginary family," but I would submit that I think my family isn't an imaginary family. But it was a family of not just four but it was of eight. And you know, I look at the call for affordability and supports for cost of living, and I'm going to speak from my own personal experience today.

You know, when I was a pastor for 27 years approximately . . . I don't know if everybody knows, but it's not the most lucrative business to be in, serving people in the church. But you know, it's a choice. And so when I was asking my wife to marry me I think I told her, I said, Tann, marrying me is probably a bad idea. I'm not going to be a wealthy man and I can't really provide very well for you, but if you join with me in the adventure I'd sure appreciate that.

And I, as many in this House have said, definitely married up, Mr. Speaker. She had a weak moment and signed in for that job. And so we together have been raising six kids in a very real family, and you know, I didn't know it until the Premier went through and was describing some of the things that, as we've been called, a tired, old, out-of-touch government have been doing for somebody like me.

You know, somebody from my past . . . You know, the most I ever made in a year, Mr. Speaker, was \$34,000, and you know, I know that sounds like, what in the world kind of person can raise six kids and not get a better job than \$34,000? But you know, it was an interesting life. It was a fun life. And I saw what our provincial government has been doing since 2007 when I moved to this province, for this very real family and for my very real kids.

And you know, when I saw that \$3,000 reduction in tax . . . I didn't actually ever hit the threshold of \$75,000 for it, but you know, the reduction for those who did, of \$3,000, those are very real.

You know, I just want to tell a funny story. My wife, amazing woman that she is, she went into the grocery store on a few occasions, more than just once, and I get a phone call from my wife and she's at the local grocery. And she says, Todd, I'm standing in the checkout, and are we out of money? Oh no. And so there's my beautiful wife standing in a lineup with groceries

for six kids and a husband and a wife, and there's no money in our bank account. And I'm on the other . . . It's like oh, what kind of lousy husband and father am I.

But if it wasn't for the support of my Saskatchewan government, doing things like the \$150 supports for active families, if it wasn't for things like in the future . . . I've got six kids, and you know, big shocker, Mr. Speaker, that I am not able to pay for all of my kids' universities. They had to take out loans and work hard. So my kids, all through high school, they worked.

[11:45]

My current son is 16 years old, he works at the swimming pool, and he makes far more money than I did back then when I was in high school, Mr. Speaker. But you know, they're going to work hard and pay what they can for their tuition and for their living. But they've all got debt, and sadly I as that wealthy father wasn't able to pay to help them get through university.

But you know, what my government has done for this very real family is they've incentivized my kids with their student loans to retain them in this province, which isn't hard for a province that's treated this family so well. They're going to help them by \$20,000 of that tax credit for my kids. They're not just stopping there for my children, but, Mr. Speaker, the government that I am a part of, they are going to help my kids in a way that I might not have been able to with a \$1,050 tax credit towards their first home purchase.

You know and so, Mr. Speaker, we talk about being out of touch, and I don't know how out of touch I am with . . . You know, Mr. Speaker, I've got some wealthy friends but I also have some friends that are quite poor. And I don't care whether I'm hanging out with Gerry Bourgault, or you know, with some girl that . . . or the member from Kindersley or a homeless person that happens to stay at our house for Thanksgiving weekend. I think we're not completely out of touch with what's going on in our province.

And I really would say that I appreciate the supports, the cost-of-living supports that our government . . . It may be tired and old because it's from 2007, but since 2007 our government has been doing those same supports, those same things and been building on that as we've moved forward.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I think a little bit about what my kids might one day have. They may have a child. I've got six of them, so the chances of having an autistic grandson or granddaughter is a very real possibility. In this province, Mr. Speaker, between 6 and \$8,000 in support for those families with that autistic child. Or whether it would be diabetes, if one of our kids might have diabetes, there are supports there for them.

You know, I just recently had a fellow come — and I think I've mentioned it before — he came to our house for supper and he had cystic fibrosis. And I know his family a little bit, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think that they would have been able to afford Trikafta, which gave their son his life back.

You know, so when it comes to cost of living, you know, I'm not sure if in the lineup, the grocery lineup, that my wife . . . I didn't see the pile of groceries that she humbly had to put back on the

shelves and, you know, whether there was a rotisserie chicken in there or not, I don't know, Mr. Speaker. But I don't think she was worried about, you know, the tax on snack food at that time. I think, you know, we had bigger worries.

But we have a provincial government . . . And I just want to ask the members across the way. You know, for me as a Saskatchewan citizen and for my kids, I want to pass on to my kids that their government actually cares for them and talk about the positive things that our government is doing.

You know the \$500 affordability cheques that came out — you know, they were called something different in my community at the coffee shop — but you know, I don't know anybody who sent those \$500 back. And you know, when I look at the \$600 of carbon tax that's on 25 000 kilometres of somebody driving their vehicle in a year, you know, on the fuel, that \$500 went a long way for families that needed it, families who realized, you know, when I go to the store, I know exactly where the cheapest jug of milk is. And you know, when you have to shop and pinch your pennies and use coupons, that's my family.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very thankful that I'm able to tell my kids, you know what, you have a government that supports you. And when times are tough, they will help you get through it. And the members across the way, I would encourage you, even though we are the government and you're wanting to be the government, but to encourage your people with the affordability supports that this current government offers your people.

Because it can be pretty depressing if you're out of money or, you know, things are a little bit tough and you're trying to send your kids to university or college and get them a better job than what you had, to be reminded that your government supports those people.

You know, and you talk about us being out of touch, and I would just ask also the members opposite to consider about how out of touch your federal leader might be without your input. And I appreciate your input in the life of your leader. I don't know if you have his phone number, but I'll bet you could get it.

And you know, if he lives in Ottawa for part of the year, and I think he was from Burnaby, BC and, you know, I don't know if it snows there very often, but if you were to take Ottawa and move it over to the west side of the country, that's Portland, Oregon. He doesn't understand some of the things that we are going through. So I would encourage you to phone him up and say, come on down here, not for a photo op, but to get some touch with the people of Saskatchewan, and we will tell you what kind of problems that you and the Prime Minister of Canada are causing with your out-of-touch carbon tax.

So, Mr. Speaker, I won't be supporting the motion put forward by the member from Saskatoon Eastview, but I will gladly support my Premier and his Finance minister in their supports for Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my honour to rise and enter into the 75-minute debate today. Of

course we'll be supporting the motion put forward by my good friend, my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Eastview. And I appreciate the dialogue that's happened so far this afternoon. In particular I always appreciate the comments coming from the member from Melfort. They are always heartfelt.

But I do have a few exceptions to some of the things he said. I doubt he will be surprised to hear that, Mr. Speaker. He did mention, I believe, a concern that he feels that we are not being positive enough about the measures that have been put forward by the government, Mr. Speaker. He often talks about how he . . . And members opposite, not just him, many members opposite have said, you know, we're not speaking well enough of government. Why aren't you applauding the work that we're doing? We're not getting enough praise from the opposition, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Well, news flash to the members opposite, Mr. Deputy Speaker: that's not our job. They do enough self-congratulations on that side already. They don't need our praise, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What our job is, is to highlight the concerns that are raised to us that we're hearing from, not just our constituents which we do hear, but from people across the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And what we are hearing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I hear in one day in my constituency in Regina Douglas Park, but what we're also hearing from people across the province are real life struggles with the cost of living in Saskatchewan today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You bet that when constituents come to our office, we make sure that they are aware of what is available to them from the government and make sure that they utilize all of those that are being made available by the government. But you bet what we hear back from them is that is simply not enough, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that is what our job is, is to convey that to government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

One of those measures that were brought forward by the government which had been mentioned by members opposite is the \$500 cheque that went out. Now this was announced in the summer of last year, of course right before or during the by-election that was happening in Meewasin.

But families didn't actually receive those cheques until November, December, January, February, several months after that was announced. I'll tell you what, Mr. Deputy Speaker. People were already feeling the pinch in July, in August of last year. They needed the money then. They didn't need to wait 6, 7, 8 months to receive that money.

Why did that money take so long to come out, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well they wanted to mail out those cheques individually. Why did they want to mail out those cheques, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Because they wanted to put forward in each of those cheque letters, a little self-congratulatory note for themselves from the Premier: you're welcome. I've given you these \$500 even though it's your money. You're welcome for giving you this money, is basically what that letter said, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

That money could have come to families a whole lot faster through a bunch of different other ways. Perhaps direct deposit is a suggestion. You know, we do live in the 21st century, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But no. If we would have done it that way, if

government would have done that that way, you know, the people of Saskatchewan wouldn't have been able to receive these letters from the Premier, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So you know, forgive me if I'm not giving the government enough praise about the \$500 cheques.

And I'll tell you, by the time it finally got to families it was used up pretty darn quick, because we are seeing more and more pinches on families' pocketbooks every single day, whether it be with gas, with fuel, whether it be with groceries, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether it be with taxes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And you betcha we are talking to every single federal party leader about our concerns about the impact of the carbon tax on the people of Saskatchewan. We don't roll over, no matter who is in power, when it comes to promoting the interests of the people of Saskatchewan at the federal stage, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That includes the leader, the federal leader of the NDP, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I'll tell you, this government is not doing a very good job of relieving the pressure. In fact we've seen them pile on more and more costs on families in Saskatchewan. I have before me — I've read this in the House before — the list of all of the tax hikes and fees that were put on Saskatchewan families last year.

And guess what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Even though members opposite don't like us talking about previous budgets, these tax hikes and fees still exist and still affect families' pocketbooks today, Mr. Speaker. There's even some from years back that, guess what, still affect families' pocketbooks today that I hadn't gotten the opportunity to talk about last time I was talking about this issue, and I wanted to make sure that I raise this time.

PST on used cars, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's a real impact on families. Trying to save a little bit of money, you know, need a new vehicle for their family, can't afford a brand new vehicle so they go and purchase a used car. My colleague, the member for Regina University, was talking about her experience with that. You have to pay the tax on that used car, and then that . . . into perpetuity, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The next person has to pay that tax again; the next person has to pay that tax again. In fact it was their former leader, the premier of Saskatchewan, Brad Wall, who said that was a bad idea. But boy, seems like things have changed, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

PST on insurance is another one. Never forget. You know, we want people to be able . . . We want people to get insurance for things. We do not want to create a barrier for people to insure things, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But the more government saddles tax onto things, it makes it less of an incentive for individuals, for families to be able to utilize those types of things like insurance, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And then we saw this government — which I think is a really interesting move during what is a cost-of-living crisis, Mr. Deputy Speaker — not act quickly to freeze the gas tax, not act quickly to roll back any of these 32 fees and tax hikes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What we saw them act quickly to do, this Throne Speech and this budget cycle, Mr. Deputy Speaker — set up their own revenue agency, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Real cost-saving measure for the

people of Saskatchewan. Something that families are really clamouring for right now, a second tax agency that they have to now deal with. Great conservative move over there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a government that likes to tout themselves as, you know, fiscal conservatives, we've seen nothing but waste and mismanagement, tax, tax hikes, fee hikes from this government. Big government. They seem to want a bigger, bigger government, the biggest government. Create a whole new revenue agency, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And again I think it's a good thing for members opposite to remember exactly what sort of things they decided to tax last budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker: sporting events, concerts, shows, movie theatres, museums, zoos. Remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when this happened last year this was at the time when, you know, people were starting to want to go to activities again. The COVID restrictions were lifting. People were feeling a bit more comfortable going out. Restaurants, concerts, these sorts of venues were really feeling the pinch, Mr. Deputy Speaker, after COVID had had a real impact on their businesses.

What did government do to try to, you know, encourage people to go out again, encourage businesses to flourish again, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well they started taxing more and more things, started taxing everything, started making it more difficult for families to be able to afford to go out.

[12:00]

And we're seeing the impact on this. I can speak just on a few examples off the top of my head. You know, we're seeing the Regina Symphony had to cancel a couple of shows this year because of lack of attendance. I've seen a couple of concerts that I wanted to go to in the past year get cancelled because of lack of attendance. I'll tell you what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government isn't doing a single thing to help address those sorts of issues.

We're seeing more and more businesses closing. This government isn't doing a single thing to help those businesses, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

A few more for the time that I have left: fairs, rodeos, trade shows, arts and craft shows, conferences, seminars, professional theatre tickets, gym memberships, golf memberships, curling fees. The list goes on and on, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure and honour for me to rise today to speak to this motion. I want to just preface my comments by saying that, you know, I've worked, I've had the great experience of working and living through a lot of different experiences, and I'm going to go back through a bit of history just to put a couple of things in perspective.

But I grew up on a family farm. I grew up in an entrepreneurial environment. I grew up where everybody had to work and to earn a living. And my colleague from Melfort just talked about that,

and that's an important part of who and what we are is that we've grown up with that work ethic. We've grown up understanding the importance of getting up in the morning, making our way out the door, and contributing in one way or the other to the best of our abilities to society around us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had the opportunity to spend part of my career in Alberta. I was there for 23 years. I was transferred there as a banker, and I worked as a banker in Alberta in the corporate oil and gas and bank branch management role. I transferred to Medicine Hat in 1980, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I arrived in Medicine Hat on May 1st, 1980. What do you think happened on the 28th of October, 1980?

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Trudeau won. National Energy Program. I was in Medicine Hat. Medicine Hat is an entirely service-oriented industry at that time, service to the oil and gas industry. What else happened in 1980? My first mortgage was 17.25 per cent.

Want to talk about cost of living? Imagine what people were dealing with in that environment. Unemployment went through the roof because of a federal policy that was poorly thought out, poorly considered, and anti-West, clearly, followed by poor policy around Bank of Canada issues. And so we had a double whammy of cost of living, incredible cost-of-living rise and, literally, in Alberta, no jobs.

So in that 23 years I was there, I also worked in corporate restructuring in the corporate world for an international consulting firm. And we dealt with a lot of the major corporations on restructuring, reorganization, and dealing with folks that, with corporate executives largely, that were dealing with the challenges in the oil and gas industry. So I will tell you that in the 23 years that we were there, we had three booms and three busts. And that speaks to the issue that the member raises in his motion and he uses the term "windfall."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, windfall is defined as a piece of unexpected good fortune. Windfall is not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, something that you can rely on to build a budget on. And I think that it's lost to the members opposite the good work that the Minister of Finance and the treasury board and the Premier have done, and the cabinet in general, in identifying the tools that are necessary to work their way through the boom-bust environment that we used to have in Saskatchewan. But if you'll recall in 2017, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we made some very, very difficult decisions to move away from that resource revenue, that boom-bust environment of resource revenue to deal with a broader-based tax base that gave us some stability in our ability to manage and to plan around the programs that are so important to the most vulnerable in our province.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just to wrap up the piece about Alberta, I just want to quote a very common bumper sticker that was available in Alberta throughout the entire time I was there. And I've got to use one word that's probably . . . No, I won't use it: "God, please give me one more oil boom. I promise not to blank it away this time."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that speaks to the issue of windfall. Windfall is not something that you can ever rely on to build a budget around. It is something entirely separate that needs to be

dealt with. And in our case we've dealt with it by capitalizing on the opportunities that we've had to make the capital expenditures that are necessary to build our infrastructure across the province and also to pay down debt. And some of that debt was accumulated during the COVID period, and so we certainly want to make every effort to stabilize that piece of our economic good fortune.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to mention a couple of things that are really important in this debate. One is that I think you will notice, if you look through the numbers, that we have spent an enormous amount of attention and dollars on programs and supports for our most vulnerable. We've talked about the Saskatchewan income support program, the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program, the seniors' income plan, the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship. We've reduced the ground ambulance cost for seniors.

A couple of things that are particularly important I think to some of my constituents, and one that sort of got overlooked real quickly, was the action that we took with cochlear implants. And I think that was a really, really important piece to some people that have struggled with that issue all their life. And obviously we've not spent any time speaking about the children's drug plan as well.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've spent a lot of time. The Minister of Finance and the Premier yesterday spent three hours talking about the incredible investments that we've made to support the people of Saskatchewan. I wish I had three hours. There is so much to say about the good things that we've been doing. My colleague from Melfort expressed some of those things as well.

But I do want to just point out that, back to the issue of windfall revenues, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our resource revenue peaked at 32 per cent of budget. So when we made the difficult decisions in 2017-18 to kind of stabilize the budget, we have now brought that level down to twelve and a half per cent. So we have a much more level base that we can work from, and I think that's going to pay dividends throughout the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to mention real quickly — I only have a minute left — but I want to mention a couple of other things. One is that the members opposite have raised a lot of issues since the budget was brought forward that they think that we should have done, so I want to make note of a couple of them.

They want us to scrap the PST on construction labour, and the member just raised that a few minutes ago. That has a cost attached to it of \$465.5 million. They talk about a lot of other cutbacks. They've talked about education funding to keep pace with inflation. That's \$79 million. Emergency funding to prevent tuition hikes, \$10 million. The total cost of the proposals that they put forward since budget: \$2.8 billion. Billion. Where is the money coming from?

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will not be supporting the motion.

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

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The members opposite are very critical of SaskPower rate increases. To the member from Saskatoon Eastview: how would you lower electrical bills, and how would you pay for it?

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

Mr. Love: — I thank the member opposite for the question to give me more time to be on my feet talking about issues that matter to Saskatchewan people. We're in a generational cost-of-living crisis, and we have a Sask Party government that's done nothing but make the situation worse — whether that's families or small businesses struggling to make ends meet. And instead of offering support, instead of stopping those rate increases, they're piling on, making life tougher for families, making life tougher for small businesses.

This is a government that's completely out of touch with the realities that families and small businesses face. And we absolutely will continue to listen to those people, finding a way forward to make life more affordable for them.

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

Mr. Teed: — Mr. Speaker, you know, every door we knock, every conversation with constituents, with folks, we're hearing, they tell us about how they are struggling under the crushing cost of living.

So I am wondering how many folks are reaching out to the member from Melfort, saying that they can't pay their bills, they can't afford groceries, that they are going to the food bank to make up for that, or they are being evicted due to skyrocketing rents. What is his response to those people?

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

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question. And you know, I must say that over the last 17, 18 years in the city of Melfort that has been an issue for many people within all of our communities. And we are very thankful for the food banks and for the local supports, and I can honestly say that it's not just the government who are the solution for a lot of the issues that everybody faces in my community.

So I appreciate you putting pressure on our provincial government, but you know, I feel completely confident knowing that our government is doing all that we can to support those people in the ways that we can. And we do appreciate your government continuing to put pressure on us on their behalf as well.

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

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To the member from Saskatoon Eastview, your party has no credibility on affordability. So long as your policy is to support the carbon tax and federal policies that disproportionately affect Saskatchewan citizens, will you acknowledge our nearly 2 billion in

affordability measures in our budget that saved families thousands of dollars each and every year?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Member for Saskatoon Eastview.

Mr. Love: — Thank the member opposite for the question. I hope he listens to this answer because our leader has been crystal clear. And I'm shocked he hasn't gotten this message yet when he sits here every day and pretends like he doesn't understand. Crystal clear, crystal clear — we don't support the federal carbon tax. And he should know that by now. The fact that he stands in his place and reads the statements handed to him, like the one he just read, shows how out of touch he truly is and the lack of listening that he brings to his job in this Assembly every day.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government opposite, of course, has brought forth the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history. They brought forward taxes and bill hikes for Saskatchewan people during an affordability, once-in-a-generation challenge that they're facing, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we hear a lot of rhetoric from members opposite, often lazy, Mr. Speaker. You know, we oppose the federal carbon tax of course, Mr. Speaker, but it's what can we do as a province.

My question to the member from Cannington, Mr. Speaker: why is his government denying action for livestock producers and consumers to have an investigation and action around meat pricing and address the anticompetitive behaviours of the meat-packing industry, Mr. Speaker, to deliver fairness for producers and consumers? You know, we have a lot of lofty rhetoric in here but it's all kid gloves when it comes to out-of-province meat packers, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the member opposite for the question. I really understand that the industry . . . The member from Rosemont, I really appreciate the question.

[12:15]

The industry has been investigating and looking into this, and they will continue to review and look into this on behalf of their producers. I might add that the member from Rosemont, I'm not sure he would understand which end you call the south end of a northbound horse. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Northcote.

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This year's budget contained record funding for health care, education, infrastructure, and more, all thanks to the successful policies and programs that keep Saskatchewan strong.

To the member from Saskatoon Eastview: your party has talked

a lot about using resource revenues to pay for additional services. What is the NDP plan for when those resource revenues are no longer at this same value? Would you claw back other services like cancer medication to pay for some of your proposals? What is your plan?

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

Mr. Love: — I'm so thankful to be on my feet to address that important question from the member opposite. Absolutely. This government continues to rely on decades-old talking points about record funding. Let's have a look at the situation in our schools and our hospitals today. The only thing that's a record today is record hallway medicine and record hallway learning. This government is failing to address the challenges in health and education, and they're relying on political talking points.

So let's have a look at what was just said in this Assembly moments ago when a member opposite said that the cost of inflation in schools is \$79 million. That doesn't even come close to meeting the meagre increase that they provided to our classrooms and absolutely proves to his own government their failure, absolute failure to invest and the impact of inflation in schools and in health care today. Thanks for the great question. I'll happily hop up again in a minute.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, since this week apparently it's a free rein for cabinet ministers to give their personal opinions publicly, I'd like to give the member for Kelvington-Wadena an opportunity for him to give his personal opinion publicly.

So to the member from Kelvington-Wadena: in a cost-of-living crisis, is it his personal opinion that the Saskatchewan revenue agency is a good idea?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank the member for that question. I think that question has been canvassed very broadly and very wisely by the Minister of Finance and the Premier, and I think that it is certainly something that is under investigation. There's lots of conversations about it, and it's been widely said, it's been widely stated that conversations with Alberta in terms of what they did over the years is of some import. But I will say that my own personal view on it, wait and see.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government's record is that of growth, infrastructure investment, and affordability. We'll continue to grow this province, build schools like in Carrot River and hospitals like in Prince Albert and ensure that Saskatchewan people have access to affordable services well into the future by paying down the debt.

To the member from Saskatoon Eastview: would you prefer to burden Saskatchewan people with more debt servicing costs in the future, or do you support our government paying down the debt in order to save taxpayers hundreds of millions into the future?

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

Mr. Love: — Again I thank the member opposite for giving me the opportunity to talk about a government that, in 15 years, has tripled our provincial debt. I'm shocked that they even raise this issue in this Assembly when the facts are clearly not in their favour.

Let's have a look at what they've done during their time in office. They've come in at times of resource boom with \$2 billion sitting in a bank for them, and they've still managed to triple our provincial debt in that time. Absolutely shocking, and it should be an embarrassment to that member that he would stand on his feet and raise this issue.

Now when it comes to infrastructure, the questions should be, are they meeting the needs of every person who's looking for health care services, for every child who's looking for a desk inside a classroom? Where are we right now? We've got blanket forts in hallways. We've got teachers holding classes in boot rooms. Completely unacceptable, and the record on this government is one that we'll continue to prosecute.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 2 — Government's Health Human Resources Action Plan

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

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured today to rise in this House to speak in support of our government's four-point health human resource action plan to recruit, train, incentivize, and retain health care workers in our province.

This plan was one of the first of its kind in Canada, and has been modelled by other provinces. Mr. Deputy Speaker, health care professionals are in demand, not only in Saskatchewan but across North America and many parts of the globe. It is an extremely competitive marketplace in the world of health care professionals today, and our province needs to be competitive in order to compete for the limited number of professionals available.

The goal of the health human resource action plan is to build a stronger, more robust workforce and is one of the most

aggressive, fulsome health care initiatives in Saskatchewan's history. Almost \$100 million has been designated across governments this year in this year's record budget to support our health human resource action plan.

The core areas of the plan are, to recruit by increasing and broadening initiatives to support a constant supply of health care workers; to train in collaboration with SHA, post-secondary institutions, and other partners to expand educational and developmental opportunities for domestic . . . and streamline training and licensure for internationally educated health care workers; to incentivize with a variety of incentives to attract and retain health care workers in today's competitive market; and to retain initiatives such as staffing enhancement, developing peer and mentorship supports, and continuous learning to support and keep staff engaged.

Two hundred and fifty full-time positions have been created in areas of need and complexity, and part-time positions have been enhanced. Initiatives are currently under way to recruit more health care workers. Two recruitment missions to the Philippines have been very successful. To date almost 400 registered nurses, 21 CCAs [continuing care aide], and two medical lab assistants have been made conditional job offers. One-third of the RNs are currently receiving training in language, bridging, and educational equivalencies, and licensing through the RN pathway.

I was chatting with the owners of one of the local coffee shops in my hometown and they are very excited to have a cousin in this bridging program. She's an RN from the Philippines and she has been offered a position in La Ronge upon her completion of this program. Her spouse and her family will be joining her here, and they're going to live in Prince Albert where her spouse intends to start a small business. So great news for La Ronge and great news for Prince Albert too.

Not only do we recruit nurses and health care professionals but they are bringing their families with them when they come. They want to become a part of our communities and raise their families here, and hopefully future grandchildren here.

Interest in coming to Saskatchewan has been high. Health care recruitment-and-retention navigators are now in place to assist potential internationally educated health care professionals who are interested in exploring options here. To date there have been over 4,600 inquiries to assist potential internationally educated health care providers. In March of this year, a navigator website was also set up and it has already had over 800 views.

More opportunities to support domestic graduates and health care professionals have also been initiated. The SHA has connected with graduates and 145 conditional letters have been extended to those who are graduating this spring, in addition to the almost 200 grad nurses from across the province and this nation.

The rural and remote recruitment initiative for hard-to-recruit positions provides opportunities for health care professionals to receive up to \$50,000. Over 100 of these packages have been awarded since this plan was implemented to health care professionals in various locations. In return for the awarding of these bursaries, recipients sign a three-year return-for-service agreement, supporting the recruitment and retention pillars of the

four-point health human resource action plan. Collaboration between Health and Advanced Education promotes recruitment and retention for today and into the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on January 31st, 2023 the Government of Saskatchewan announced an investment of more than \$5.5 million to support approximately 550 new post-secondary seats across 18 health care training programs, including medical lab assistants, primary care paramedic, licensed practical nurse, pharmacy tech, medical radiation technologist, physical therapist, and mental health and addiction counsellors. A further \$25.5 million in '23-24 supports the continued implementation of all of these seats.

Our government has reached out to our Indigenous partners, and we are providing the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies to be able to provide 20 additional CCA seats in my home community as well as a one-time increase of . . . [inaudible] . . . practical nursing seats. The Gabriel Dumont Institute will also have additional CCA seats and a one-time expansion to their LPN program.

Advanced Education provides student loan forgiveness of up to \$20,000 in rural and hard-to-recruit areas, and up to \$20,000 through the graduate retention program for those graduates who continue to work in our province. The recent launch of a new grad nurse expression of interest initiative matches graduates to areas based on their interest and skill.

Action was taken by working with Sask Polytechnic with the support for international nurses to fast-track and expand the registered nursing bridging program. The first cohort from the Philippines began in November. The offering of micro-credentialing programs through the University of Regina, Southeast College, North West College, First Nations University, and Sask Polytech surgical program provides opportunity for short-term ongoing education to use in the workplace.

Saskatchewan will be creating opportunities for a new health professional, the physician assistant, to help address the demand for health care resources and support team-based care. The four-point plan also includes enhancement to the rural physician incentive program. Starting April 1st of this year, the incentive was increased to \$200,000 over five years, more than four times the previous amount. This program was initiated by our government in 2013-14 for recent Canadian graduates and has now been expanded to include international medical graduates.

The ministers of Health recently announced for the plan to develop a made-in-Saskatchewan compensation model, based on the model of blended capitation that will support efforts to recruit and retain family physicians. This plan blends a base payment for a basket of services provided per patient for service, with the amount being adjusted based on the age, gender, and complexity of the patient. Additional fees may also be for services rendered that were not in the basket.

[12:30]

The current fee-for-service models is based strictly on quantity. This model will also create an opportunity for a team-based approach of care by increasing collaboration, patient access, and quality of care, along with more equitable distribution of care

access across the health care team.

The Minister of Health stated:

We are excited to be pursuing a compensation model that supports family physician-led team-based care and a more sustainable health care system in Saskatchewan. We take the concerns and needs of our patients and our family physicians very seriously and look forward to seeing this work in advance.

This model was recommended by the stakeholders' working group, members from SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] and SHA, as a follow-up to concerns that were raised. The plan will be an effective tool to both recruit new family physicians and retain those who are here.

To quote the new president of SMA, from Gormley, "It is pretty exciting that the government, together with the physicians, is working to develop a new model of care that hopefully is going to benefit patients in the province as well."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the health human resource action plan is providing opportunities for health care professionals never before seen in this province.

In conclusion to my remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I support the following motion as presented by the member from Lloydminster:

That this Assembly supports the four-point health human resources action plan that is assisting in the recruitment, training, and incentivization, and retention of health care workers in the province of Saskatchewan. And that the health human resource action plan is showing results in hiring of internationally and domestically educated health care workers who will support a strong provincial health care system into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know I will be concurrently adjourning both debate on the motion and the House, but I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — This House now stands adjourned until Monday, 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:33.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Scott Moe
Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement
Minister Responsible for the
Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for
The Global Transportation Hub Authority

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Highways
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Education

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Trade and Export Development
Minister of Immigration and Career Training
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

Hon. Everett Hindley
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,
Seniors and Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Services

Hon. David Marit
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for
First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the
Provincial Capital Commission

Hon. Paul Merriman
Minister of Health

Hon. Don Morgan
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for the
Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of Energy and Resources

Hon. Laura Ross
Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Dana Skoropad
Minister of Environment

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety
Minister Responsible for the Firearms Secretariat

Hon. Gordon Wyant
Minister of Advanced Education