



FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

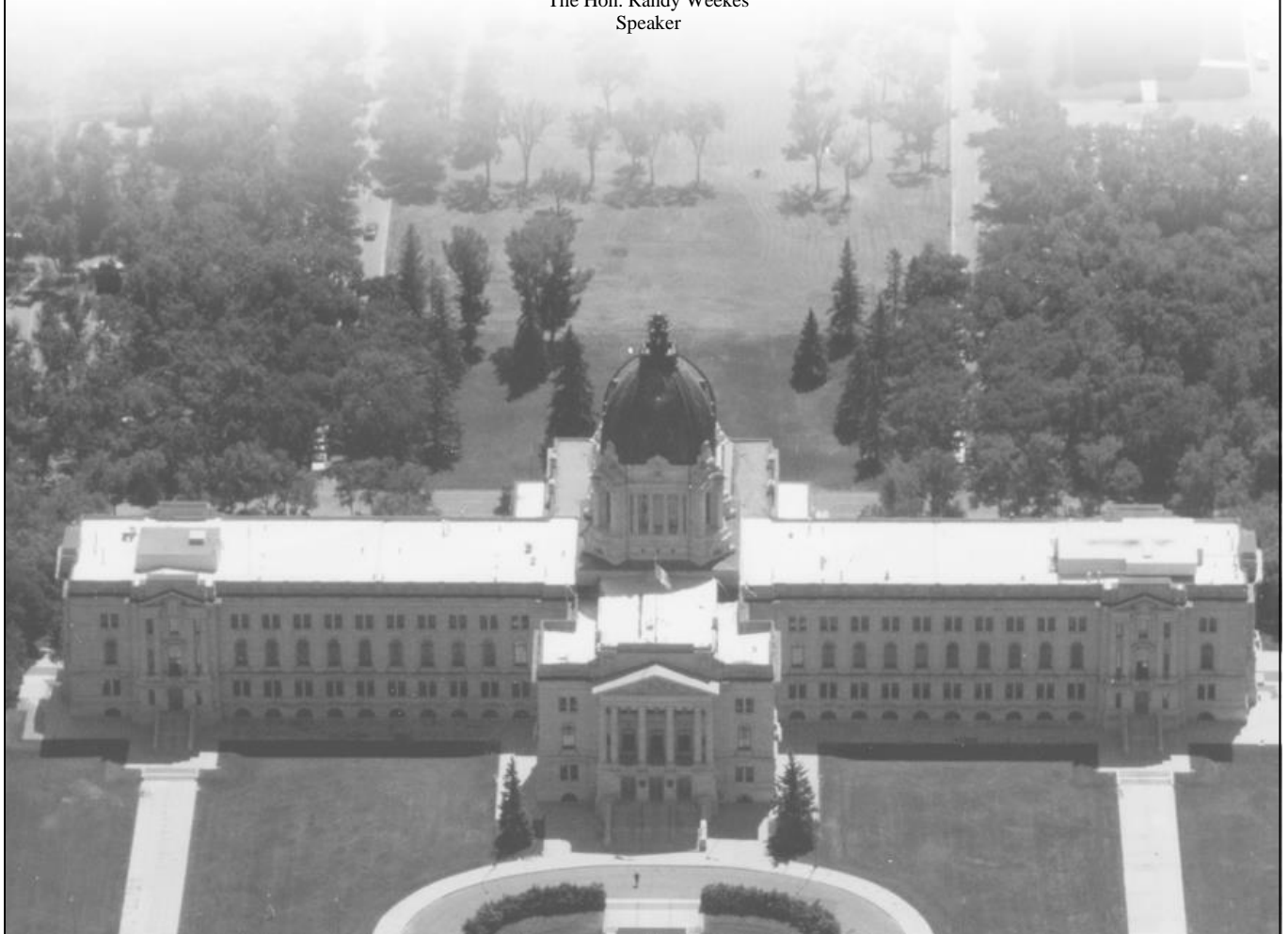
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
AND  
PROCEEDINGS**

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



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**4th Session — 29th Legislature**

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

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

<b>Beck, Carla</b> — Regina Lakeview (NDP)	<b>Lemaigre, Jim</b> — Athabasca (SP)
<b>Bonk, Steven</b> — Moosomin (SP)	<b>Love, Matt</b> — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)
<b>Bowes, Jennifer</b> — Saskatoon University (NDP)	<b>Makowsky, Hon. Gene</b> — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
<b>Bradshaw, Fred</b> — Carrot River Valley (SP)	<b>Marit, Hon. David</b> — Wood River (SP)
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<b>Clarke, Jared</b> — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP)	<b>Moe, Hon. Scott</b> — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
<b>Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy</b> — The Battlefords (SP)	<b>Morgan, Hon. Don</b> — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
<b>Conway, Meara</b> — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)	<b>Mowat, Vicki</b> — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
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<b>Hargrave, Hon. Joe</b> — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	<b>Steele, Doug</b> — Cypress Hills (SP)
<b>Harpauer, Hon. Donna</b> — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	<b>Teed, Nathaniel</b> — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
<b>Harrison, Daryl</b> — Cannington (SP)	<b>Tell, Hon. Christine</b> — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
<b>Harrison, Hon. Jeremy</b> — Meadow Lake (SP)	<b>Vermette, Doyle</b> — Cumberland (NDP)
<b>Hindley, Hon. Everett</b> — Swift Current (SP)	<b>Weekes, Hon. Randy</b> — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
<b>Jenson, Terry</b> — Martensville-Warman (SP)	<b>Wilson, Nadine</b> — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
<b>Kaeding, Warren</b> — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	<b>Wotherspoon, Trent</b> — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
<b>Keisig, Travis</b> — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	<b>Wyant, Hon. Gordon</b> — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
<b>Kirsch, Delbert</b> — Batoche (SP)	<b>Young, Aleana</b> — Regina University (NDP)
<b>Lambert, Lisa</b> — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	<b>Young, Colleen</b> — Lloydminster (SP)
<b>Lawrence, Greg</b> — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	

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**Standings**

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 46; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 14;  
Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1

**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

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within hours after each sitting.

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## CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Steele .....	4589
Wotherspoon .....	4589
Makowsky .....	4589
Clarke .....	4590
Beck .....	4598
Vermette .....	4598
McMorris .....	4599

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mowat .....	4589
Bradshaw .....	4589
Sarauer .....	4589
Ritchie .....	4590

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### Unity Western Days 40th Anniversary Celebration

Domotor .....	4590
---------------	------

##### New Bookstore Opens in Saskatoon

Teed .....	4590
------------	------

##### Medical Radiation Technologist Week

Jenson .....	4591
--------------	------

##### Research Team's Findings Benefit Forestry and Farming Industries

Wilson .....	4591
--------------	------

##### Expansion of Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program

Dennis .....	4591
--------------	------

##### Cereal Grains Industry Drives Economic Growth

Bradshaw .....	4592
----------------	------

##### Opposition Position on Energy Industries

Harrison, D. ....	4592
-------------------	------

#### QUESTION PERIOD

##### Staffing at Ile-a-la-Crosse Hospital

Beck .....	4592
------------	------

Hindley .....	4592
---------------	------

##### Support for Ambulance Services

Beck .....	4593
------------	------

Hindley .....	4593
---------------	------

Mowat .....	4593
-------------	------

Clarke .....	4594
--------------	------

##### Allegations of Racism at Regina General Hospital

Burki .....	4595
-------------	------

Hindley .....	4595
---------------	------

##### Education Policy and Mental Health Supports for Youth

Teed .....	4596
------------	------

Cockrill .....	4596
----------------	------

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill No. 144 — *The Police (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2023*

Merriman .....	4597
----------------	------

##### Bill No. 145 — *The Funeral and Cremation Services (Legal Decision-Maker Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*

Eyre .....	4597
------------	------

##### Bill No. 146 — *The King's Bench Consequential Amendments Act, 2023*

Eyre .....	4597
------------	------

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 143 — *The Child Care Amendment Act, 2023/Loi modificative de 2023 sur les garderies d'enfants*

Cockrill .....	4597
----------------	------

Sarauer .....	4598
---------------	------

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 138 — *The Workers' Compensation (Extending Firefighter Coverage) Amendment Act, 2023*

Ritchie .....	4599
---------------	------

**Bill No. 140 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2023***  
    **Wotherspoon** .....4600  
**Bill No. 141 — *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023***  
    **Wotherspoon** .....4611  
**Bill No. 142 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Utility Line Locates) Amendment Act, 2023***  
    **Young, A.** .....4601

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Mr. Steele:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I have three, four guests here today from the Southwest. I'd like to introduce the CEO [chief executive officer] of the South West Terminal, Monty Reich. Monty, give us a wave. Next is — make sure I get your job description — senior manager of business development, Robert Chapman. And also we have in your gallery, we have Justin Isherwood, and he's the grain manager for the terminal.

Also not a stranger to our Assembly, the best CA [constituency assistant] in the Southwest — he's the only CA in the Southwest — my friend and my colleague or my work partner there, Sean Checkley. Welcome to your Assembly. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to join with the member to welcome these leaders in agriculture in the Southwest to their Assembly, to welcome Sean Checkley as well — I believe still the mayor of Fox Valley, correct? — as well as serving in his role as a constituency assistant.

I do want to welcome those from south east terminal, those involved in movement of — sorry, South West Terminal — to their Assembly. Obviously they're important leaders to this province and to their region and to producers, and I just want to welcome them to their Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery there is a group of students from St. Gabriel School, 24 of them in grade 7. I know St. Gabriel very well. All my boys went to St. Gabriel over the years, and a lot of the students up there are probably neighbours of mine. So great to have them here. Their teacher is Abbigayle Kleisinger, and I look forward to chatting with them after the proceedings here today. And I ask all members to help me welcome them here today.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to act on a suicide prevention strategy. These citizens wish to bring to our attention: that *The Saskatchewan Strategy for Suicide Prevention Act* received Royal Assent on April 30th, 2021; that the ministry is required under the Act to consult with community organizations in the development of a

suicide prevention strategy.

We know that suicide is the leading cause of death for teenagers in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and that suicide rates for Indigenous people in Saskatchewan are four times higher than for non-Indigenous people. The time to act is far overdue, 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 immediately work with community organizations and leaders in the North to develop Saskatchewan's suicide prevention strategy.

This is signed by individuals from Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring your attention to the following: whereas the Trudeau Liberal-NDP [New Democratic Party] coalition carbon tax is one of the main causes of affordability issues and inflation in the nation of Canada; and that the federal government has signalled that the carbon tax does affect Canadians differently by issuing an exemption on home heating oil for Atlantic Canadian provinces; further that the people of Saskatchewan, 85 per cent of whom rely on natural gas to heat their homes, are unfairly left without support by the Liberal-NDP coalition who continue to drive up the cost of living with their price on carbon.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to call on the Government of Canada to immediately remove the carbon tax from all home heating costs across Canada to reduce inflation and drive down the rising cost of living faced by all Canadians from coast to coast.

It is signed below by the good residents of Humboldt and Regina. I so submit.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for the government to improve labour laws in Saskatchewan.

Those who have signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: that even after the October 1st increase to minimum wage, Saskatchewan's minimum wage remains the lowest in Canada; as well the official opposition has twice introduced paid sick leave legislation since the onset of the pandemic calling for a minimum of 10 paid sick days each year and 14 days during a public health crisis.

Mr. Speaker, paid sick leave has been proven to save employers money while making workplaces healthier and safer for all workers. As well, Mr. Speaker, 71 per cent of workers in Canada have experienced workplace violence and/or harassment, and much more needs to be done to ensure that workplaces in Saskatchewan are harassment free.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to improve conditions for Saskatchewan workers by passing legislation to increase the minimum wage, guarantee paid sick leave, limit nondisclosure agreements which could silence survivors of workplace harassment, and require employers to track and report incidents of violence and harassment in the workplace.

The individuals signing this petition today come from Saskatoon and Estevan. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today 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 according to a survey by Angus Reid, 59 per cent of Saskatchewan people said they are financially worse off than a year ago, 48 per cent of people said they expect to be worse off financially next year than this year, and 55 per cent of Saskatchewan people said they have a tough or very difficult time paying their rent or mortgage; and that the Saskatchewan Party government's tax and fee hikes make life more expensive; the Sask Party government has increased SaskPower bills three times in the last year, with a total increase of 11 per cent; and that while other provinces have acted, the Sask Party government has failed to offer any cost-of-living relief for families in 2023.

I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly call on the Government of Saskatchewan to meaningfully address the cost-of-living crisis in Saskatchewan.

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

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member on his feet?

**Mr. Clarke:** — To request leave for an introduction, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member has requested leave for an introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Clarke:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to take a moment to welcome a grade 4 class from Henry Janzen School. There's 26 of them here. And it's great to have you guys here and to see what happens in the legislature. They're joined by their teacher, Roxanne Leung, and parent chaperones Gwyneth Molesky, Greg Park, and Jessica Stephenson.

So as a fellow teacher, a grade 6/7 teacher for many years, I'm so excited to have you guys here and watch and learn. And I'm looking forward to chatting with you after question period. So think of all your good questions that you've got for me, okay? Thank you.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

### Unity Western Days 40th Anniversary Celebration

**Mr. Domotor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On June 3rd and 4th of this year, Unity hosted their 40th Western Days and rodeo events. Mr. Speaker, I had the absolute pleasure of attending the rodeo banquet on the Friday evening and participated in the parade on the Saturday morning.

Mr. Speaker, due to the pandemic their 40th anniversary celebrations had been pushed back by two years, making 2023 the year to celebrate. Unity Western Days began back in 1982. Events included of course the rodeo itself, a rodeo queen crowning, a rodeo dance, and a parade. To celebrate their 40th anniversary this year, a total of \$40,000 was donated to eight different community organizations in Unity.

As you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, an event such as this does not happen with one person alone. This is a community event and therefore it takes all hands on deck to make it successful. The Unity Kinsmen, the Unity Kinettes, and the Unity Chamber of Commerce are mentioned as the groups that originally got this huge project off the ground. This community inaugural event, an annual tradition, goes ahead rain or shine, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in congratulating the community of Unity and all of the volunteers involved to ensure that this weekend is always a huge success. Thank you.

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

### New Bookstore Opens in Saskatoon

**Mr. Teed:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. From 25th Street northward in Saskatoon, Saskatoon Meewasin is home to many businesses located just north of Saskatoon's downtown. These businesses represent a thriving business community with coffee shops like Sparrow and City Perks, to restaurants such as Earls and stores like Ingredients and so many more I wish I could list.

As a small-business owner, I'm always excited to see people

strike out on an entrepreneurial journey. And as the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Saskatoon Meewasin, I am so pleased to see a new small business open in the riding. Pages of Passion is a romance-only bookstore recently opened on Duchess Street in City Park.

Pages of Passion celebrated their grand opening just before the Thanksgiving weekend. It is a romance-only bookstore in Saskatoon and describes itself as specializing in all things love, passion, spice, and sex positivity.

From sports romance to fantasy romance to young adult romance, Pages of Passion has it all. They have a loyalty rewards program and will host events in the community. In fact they just hosted a book launch event for the book *Iron Flame* by Rebecca Yarros just last night.

Jessica, the owner of Pages of Passion, describes herself as an avid book lover who has always wanted to open a bookstore. I'd ask all members to join me in saying congratulations to Jessica for opening her shop and making her dream of becoming an entrepreneur a reality.

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

#### Medical Radiation Technologist Week

**Mr. Jenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to recognize Medical Radiation Technologist Week from November 5th to November 11th. This week we celebrate the many contributions medical radiation technologists make across our health care system, whether in a hospital, clinic, or health centre.

Mr. Speaker, our government is working to ensure we have the right mix and the right number of health care providers to meet the needs of patients. In 2023-24 our government is investing nearly \$100 million into Saskatchewan's health human resources action plan to recruit, train, incentivize, and retain more health care workers. Since 2007 the number of medical radiation technologists has increased by nearly 50 per cent. While this is great progress, Mr. Speaker, it's important to keep building capacity for the future in Saskatchewan.

Earlier this year our government announced the expansion of more than 550 seats in high-demand health professions, including an eight-seat increase to the medical radiation technologist program this year. A further expansion of 12 seats will be added to Sask Polytech programs over time. Building capacity and strengthening our current and future health care workforce are top priorities for our government.

Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to have proclaimed this week Medical Radiation Technologist Week in recognition of the importance of these qualified professionals. I ask all members to now join me in thanking them for their dedication and hard work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Research Team's Findings Benefit Forestry and Farming Industries

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to recognize and congratulate a constituent of mine, Mr. Dave Halstead, who is a research Chair with Sask Polytechnic. Dave and his research team's findings will have significant impact on our forestry and farming. This work was performed at the Hannin Creek Education and Applied Research Centre located at beautiful Candle Lake.

[13:45]

Dave and his research team discovered a way to speed up Jack pine tree growth while also improving soil health and improving carbon capture. They have shown that biochar outperforms chemical fertilizer, hydro mulch, and peat moss commonly used in the industry. Biochar is a char-like substance created by burning organic material from agriculture and forestry biomass. Its porous nature allows it to hold moisture and nutrients, creating ideal growing conditions.

As a result of this work, Mr. Halstead's six-month research trial has been expanded to five years. Please join me in congratulating him and the outstanding contribution that has been made to our forestry and farming industries. Thank you.

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

#### Expansion of Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program

**Mr. Dennis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week my colleagues from Martensville-Warman and Saskatoon Westview were at an announcement at a local business, Saskatoon Fire and Flood. What announcement, you ask, Mr. Speaker? The expansion of the SINP [Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program] program to include 279 new occupations, intermediate and lower skill occupations. This is amazing news, as there are 16,000 jobs on SaskJobs waiting for people to fill them.

And, Mr. Speaker, our government is very proud of the work we have done in immigration. Our work with the Ukrainian newcomers has been particularly important to me. New Ukrainians now make up 22 per cent of the workforce in Saskatoon Fire and Flood.

Mr. Speaker, our government knows what an important role immigration plays in our workforce, and our provincial immigration nominee program is constantly adapting to fit the labour market needs. And unlike the NDP opposition, we have a plan. And part of that plan is to increase the population to 1.4 million by 2030. Mr. Speaker, that includes our creating 100,000 jobs by the end of the decade.

As our government, we are proud of the initiatives that we have put forward. And it is great to see how hard-working our new neighbours in the province are and how excited they are to work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Cereal Grains Industry Drives Economic Growth

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The cereal grains industry is driving economic growth across the nation. A recent GlobalData provincial economic impact report shows the strength of Saskatchewan's cereal grains industry and its importance to Canada's economy.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's cereal grains farming sector generates \$10.54 billion of economic impact and provides 66,300 jobs. Processing of these grains also contributes a further \$3.2 billion and creates 11,100 jobs. In total, that makes up almost a fifth of all the total impact of cereal grains in the nation of Canada. Mr. Speaker, these cereals are enjoyed by families across the country and are exported to over 88 countries around the world.

This government will continue to be there to support our growing cereal grains industry internationally by sharing the Saskatchewan advantage with our trading partners across the globe. We will also continue to support these producers locally by investing in highways and transportation to get these grains to market.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we're proud of our economy and the producers who fuel it. And, Mr. Speaker, you certainly won't hear us describing it as a dumpster fire. On behalf of the Legislative Assembly, thank you to our cereal grains producers and their partners for keeping us fed and helping us create so many good jobs here in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Opposition Position on Energy Industries

**Mr. D. Harrison:** — We know the Opposition Leader can't get her phone calls answered by her federal master, Jagmeet Singh. Apparently the member for Regina Rosemont has been more successful.

It appears the federal NDP are using his tax-and-spend ideas. Yesterday Jagmeet Singh said he wanted to hit the oil and gas industry with a windfall tax to pay for heat pumps. The member for Regina Rosemont has proposed windfall taxes in the past. Maybe they're working together on this scheme. Singh is proposing taxing Western Canadian-based companies to pay for heat pumps that don't work as a primary heat source in Western Canada. That's NDP logic for you.

They apparently agree with their federal counterparts on a tax-and-spend regime — not surprised considering their party's willingness to support the Leap Manifesto — that would see an end to fossil fuels projects and the jobs that go with them. Until the NDP can rid the country of these projects, they're happy to tax them into oblivion.

Just yesterday we heard about our province's remarkable job growth — over 19,000 new jobs year over year. What do we hear from the members opposite? Crickets. Nothing. Overtaxing an industry, supporting that manifesto, and supporting a massive increase to the carbon tax that their party officially supports but leads to tens of thousands of jobs lost here in Saskatchewan —

talk about failing to stand up for Saskatchewan's interests.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Staffing at Ile-a-la-Crosse Hospital

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government has lost sight of the things that matter. And nowhere, nowhere is that more clear than when it comes to health care.

In Ile-a-la-Crosse at the St. Joseph's Health Centre, it's again facing bed closures because of short-staffing. Sick patients who need care have to travel out of their community if they need a hospital bed, a situation that's been ongoing since the beginning of July. Does this government think that it's acceptable for beds to be closed at the Ile-a-la-Crosse hospital?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government does recognize that it's important for people across Saskatchewan regardless of where they live, anywhere in this province, including in Ile-a-la-Crosse, that they have consistent access to local health care for their citizens. And this is part of why the government introduced a four-point action plan for health care to recruit, train, incentivize, and retain health care workers, Mr. Speaker, and that would include the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse.

And I would extend my apologies to the people of that community. We want to ensure that we have that health care there consistently in their community. But I can inform the House, Mr. Speaker, that all but one registered nurse position has been filled, and we're actively recruiting for that remaining RN [registered nurse] position and for the vacant LPN [licensed practical nurse] positions currently in Ile-a-la-Crosse. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, consistently closed for five months. This government made the case during the Athabasca by-election that people should vote for a government MLA if they want to see improvements in the North. It's the same entitled and out-of-touch argument we heard from Gудie Hutchings and the federal Liberals. Now let's make this clear. It was wrong for the cabinet minister to say those things on CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.], just as it was wrong for the Premier to campaign that way in a by-election, Mr. Speaker. And it's especially the case when we see the results today: beds closed for the whole summer through to December.

How is this fair to the people of Ile-a-la-Crosse, and why is this tired and out-of-touch government continuing to fail the people of the Northwest?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said previously there is one vacant RN position that is remaining to be filled and they're working very hard to fill the vacant LPN positions in that community. Community engagement and



consultation is ongoing as we work to build health care in Ile-a-la-Crosse, Mr. Speaker.

And I could say this: this government is committed to improving health care for people right across this province. That includes in northern Saskatchewan, where we've announced and opened a new long-term care facility in the community of Meadow Lake just last summer, Mr. Speaker. In addition to that, a significant investment into the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital which serves all of northern Saskatchewan and a new and expanded long-term care home in the community of La Ronge, Mr. Speaker.

It's improving access, creating more beds, hiring more people, more northerners working in that community, to provide long-term care and acute health care to people across northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Support for Ambulance Services

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, the list of the ways this government is failing the people of the Northwest is long. Documents we've received through FOI [freedom of information] show that communities in the region went dozens and dozens of times with no local ambulance available.

Here's the list: in Ile-a-la-Crosse, 11 calls; Beauval, there were 35 calls; Buffalo Narrows, 56 calls; and in La Loche, 70 calls. That's 172 times where people needing an ambulance phoned, but there was no local ambulance available. Is this, Mr. Speaker, what that government would call building and protecting northern Saskatchewan? Is this what it looks like to the Premier? And how, Mr. Speaker, is this growth that works for everyone?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And in addition to what I stated previously, I would put on the record as well that we have a very, very effective and engaged MLA for northern Saskatchewan serving the constituency of Athabasca who meets regularly with myself and the Minister for Rural and Remote Health, bringing those issues, bringing those priorities forward, Mr. Speaker.

And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, as a result of that MLA's advocacy in the constituency of Athabasca, that we have made some significant investments into that constituency, such as, under the EMS [emergency medical services] portfolio, new paramedicine positions in the community of Beauval; other investments into EMS in northern Saskatchewan; and not that long ago, earlier this year, the expansion of more addictions treatment spaces in the community of Pinehouse in the constituency of Athabasca — all projects that have been advocated for by a very, very good MLA for that riding who will continue to bring that voice to the government table, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, perhaps members opposite need to be reminded that they are voted as government to provide service to people in every area of this province regardless of who represents

them.

And people in the Northwest, Mr. Speaker, are tired — they're tired of being taken for granted by this government — as are people across rural Saskatchewan. Since February of this year, there were 579 times that someone in a rural community needed an ambulance but no local ambulance was available.

This tired and out-of-touch government have been in power for 16 years. And let's be clear: this is their record. How does this government justify to the rural members of this caucus that 579 times their constituents needed an ambulance but no local ambulance was available?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll say it again for the Leader of the Opposition, who apparently wasn't paying attention to the answer I gave previously about a new long-term care home in the community of La Ronge, which is represented by a member from the opposition, Mr. Speaker. So yes, we do support communities and constituencies right across this province, whether or not they're represented by an NDP member or by a Saskatchewan Party member.

Mr. Speaker, we have invested, since 2007, \$2.4 billion into capital infrastructure in health care right across this province. As I said Prince Albert Victoria Hospital, Mr. Speaker; Weyburn; the La Ronge long-term care home; the community of Grenfell where the construction is now under way on a new long-term care facility in that community; urgent care centres in Regina and Saskatoon; a major health renovation project again — where? — in La Ronge. Work being done in Rosthern. A new integrated facility in Esterhazy. I could go on and on and on, on the significant capital investments this government has made for people right across this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll remind the minister that the question was about ambulances, as was the last one. Mr. Speaker, the FOI shows that there were 1,132 times since February where no local ambulance was available during an emergency. And let's remember, this only includes communities with SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] ambulances. Saskatoon, Prince Albert, they have private services; they aren't even counted here. More than 1,100 Saskatchewan people didn't have a local ambulance when they needed one. How is this building and protecting Saskatchewan? And how is this growth that works for everyone?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has made significant investments into the area of ground ambulance. And we've been fortunate — myself, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health — to have regular meetings with the leadership, whether it's through the SHA or with Paramedic Services Chiefs of Saskatchewan, with Medavie on the work that's being done out there where we've had some successes and where we have challenges that we need to address, Mr. Speaker. And we will do that.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to improving patient flows and doing everything we can to ensure that we are improving that flow so that the people of this province, when they need an ambulance, that they're able to receive that.

And it is important that we continue to invest in this area. We've invested in more training seats for paramedics. We've invested in more ambulance cars across this province, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue to support them.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, if the minister won't listen to his own numbers that show how bad things are in the ambulance system, maybe he'll listen to some of the paramedics who wrote to me with their concerns.

[14:00]

Quote:

As I type this email, I'm sitting in the hallway of the Regina General Hospital emergency department. I'm an advanced care paramedic with 25 years of experience and currently work in Regina. I have a radio with me and I can hear how busy the city EMS system is. There are currently no ambulances available for the entire city of Regina and the surrounding area.

The health care system is broken and the SHA and the Sask Party are doing nothing to fix it. Someone is going to die in the community while waiting for an ambulance.

This isn't a blip. This isn't an anomaly. This happens all the time. When will we finally see some urgent action to fix this problem?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to begin by thanking all of our front-line paramedics and all those that work in EMS that provide this very, very valuable service to people across Saskatchewan each and every day, recognizing that there are hundreds of calls each and every day that paramedics tend to right across our province, whether it's in our major centres, rural communities and northern communities as well. We are working very, very hard to support them in what it is that they do, Mr. Speaker.

And again as I said earlier, I would acknowledge that yes, we do have some challenges there, but we are taking steps, Mr. Speaker. For example, here in the city of Regina earlier this year, February, we announced \$2.4 million for twenty-four and a half additional FTE [full-time equivalent] positions to staff two more ambulances in the city of Regina. As I said previously, meeting regularly with the leadership both at the SHA, with Medavie, with the Paramedic Services Chiefs, and our ministry officials to continue to work to make progress in this very important area for people across our province, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, this minister is failing to ensure that people get timely access to an ambulance. At least 1,100 times someone in Saskatchewan needed a local ambulance and it wasn't available.

Another Regina paramedic wrote to me, and this is what they say:

If you look back over just the month of October, you would see we were short an ambulance or more dozens of times.

They also said:

The SHA hired 24 positions earlier this year, but they were merely budgeted, not hired. Twelve of those positions are still not filled due to staffing. We have hired almost as many as have quit. Working short is not new to us and having government officials tell the public otherwise is irresponsible.

How much worse do things have to get before this tired and out-of-touch government will stop the spin and fix the problems in health care?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we will continue on our four-point action plan to recruit, train, incentivize, and retain health care workers across this province, and that includes those that are paramedics, again working to fill these vacancies as quickly as we possibly can, Mr. Speaker.

And I can say, Mr. Speaker, as an example — and there is significant interest in this area — as an example, in July this government launched a new bursary program for students that are going in to train to become paramedics, a total of 58 bursaries, Mr. Speaker. There was very, very quick uptake of all 58 of those bursaries. They were all awarded, Mr. Speaker.

And in addition to that, in addition, Mr. Speaker, due to the high rate of application uptake, we actually came back and decided to add some additional funding for another 35 bursaries which have also been awarded, Mr. Speaker, for a total of 93 bursaries.

Yes, we have some challenges in certain areas of EMS around this province, but we are working with our partners to address those gaps and make sure that we're filling those vacancies and finding the paramedics we need to provide that service.

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

**Mr. Clarke:** — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing people in Regina on so many fronts. The FOI shows that there were 323 calls for a local ambulance in Regina where there was no ambulance available. That means that people have to wait until an ambulance is freed up to make the trip, or it means the fire department has to pick up the slack. Neither option is acceptable. When you need an ambulance, a local ambulance should be ready to go.

What does the minister say to the 323 Regina residents who were told "no" when they needed a local ambulance?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Mr. Speaker, as part of the provincial response plan, when a local ambulance is not available, the next closest ambulance available is dispatched to the call. This is managed by our ambulance providers and the dispatch centre, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we are having ambulances respond.

Now as I said previously, Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that we do face some pressures, and we are working very hard to address those pressures. And I've spoken before of some of the investments specific to training, Mr. Speaker, and in addition to that also specific to the city of Regina and what has been created and funded for, for new positions and new ambulances in this community.

There's been additional FTEs added across the province in rural communities, Mr. Speaker, to address some of the challenges in rural Saskatchewan and northern communities as well, additional one-time funding for the EMS providers across Saskatchewan in last year's budget to acknowledge some of the pressures they were facing. And this continues to be a priority for us, and we'll work with our ambulance providers to address those gaps, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Clarke:** — Mr. Speaker, this minister can spin all he wants, but these are real people. And I know one of these 323 people who didn't have access to an ambulance when they needed one. She lives in Regina. She's 92 years old. She laid on her kitchen floor for an hour and 40 minutes after falling and breaking her hip.

Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, lying on the floor in pain, unable to be moved, without the ability to take a painkiller for more than an hour and a half?

What does the minister say to her and to the other 322 Regina residents who didn't have access to a local ambulance when they needed it?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to that individual I would say that that is not acceptable. That is not what our expectation is as government. I know it's not the expectation of the ambulance operator and the provider and the very, very valuable paramedics that are providing this service right across our province in each and every one of our communities, Mr. Speaker.

Again this is why, as I said previously, we are making some very, very significant investments into the area of ground EMS to support our health care teams, Mr. Speaker — significant dollars towards this area and regularly engaging and consulting with community leaders and also with leaders when it comes to paramedics in Saskatchewan and ground EMS to make sure that we have these regular conversations and make some decisions around how can we better improve what we are doing to offer this service to residents of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Clarke:** — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government isn't focused on the things that matter to Saskatchewan people. They should be focused on ending the short-staffing in our ambulances and our health centres. But they are too focused on their own pet projects and sowing division.

The people of Regina Walsh Acres sent this government a message: focus on the cost of living and the crisis in our health care system. But it's so clear that this minister didn't get the message. When will we see a real plan to make sure people in Regina get an ambulance when they need one?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And specific to the member opposite's earlier point and the case he's pointed to, our office would be willing to follow up and look into that situation if the member so chooses and wishes to share information with our office, Mr. Speaker.

I've said multiple times now, the investments have been made into EMS, into ambulances across this province, Mr. Speaker. And also at the same time I've acknowledged some of the challenges that we are currently facing and that we are working with our partners to address some of these challenges, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that we're improving upon the ambulance care that we have for people of this province.

But I'd say this, Mr. Speaker. We've heard a lot of questions from the members opposite, but not any solutions from them across the way. No answers, no plan as to what else they would do. And they yell about, the member for Cumberland talks about 16 years and the same tired lines he always gives. But it's time for the members opposite, if they've got some ideas, they should present them across the way. Because there's nothing from the no-plan-party members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Allegations of Racism at Regina General Hospital**

**Mr. Burki:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Health stated very clearly that he opposed racism and discrimination in our health care system and that it has no space in our province. I agree and I applaud him for that statement.

But I asked a simple question from him that he didn't answer yesterday. I will ask him again: when did the Minister of Health learn of allegations of racism and discrimination at Regina General Hospital? And what did he do about it at that time?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated yesterday, and I'll reiterate today that there is no room for racism in this province and in our health care system. And I reiterate that. As I stated yesterday it's my understanding the SHA has launched a third-party review into what is happening in this particular circumstance, Mr. Speaker. And as I said, we'll await

those findings and have raised this with both the CEO of the SHA and also senior leadership at the Ministry of Health to take a very close look into the situation, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Burki:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister still didn't answer the question. What was the date when the allegations of racism were brought to his attention and what did he do about it?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my previous answer and as I said yesterday, this government is committed to ensuring that there is no place for racism in any of our health care facilities in our health care sector, or across the province. The SHA is investigating into these allegations, Mr. Speaker, and will be looking very thoroughly into this particular case.

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

**Mr. Burki:** — Mr. Speaker, we agreed that racism and discrimination have no place in our province. But the minister is still not answering the question. On what day was he briefed on allegations of racism at Regina General Hospital? Why did it take a national news story for him to take action finally on it?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know the exact day that I was made aware of the situation, but I can tell you that when it was brought to my attention that I asked our officials to immediately look into the situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Education Policy and Mental Health Supports for Youth

**Mr. Teed:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Education has said that there are ample supports for queer and trans youth facing mental health challenges in our schools. These vulnerable youth are at increased risk of suicide, and with Bill 137 stripping away the Charter rights of children, those kids are at even greater risk.

We've already heard from Sarah Mackenzie about the loss of her gender-diverse child, Bee. She doesn't want to see more kids lost to suicide, and neither should this government.

To the Minister of Education: what specific mental health supports will be put in place in our schools to ensure that we won't lose more vulnerable kids to suicide?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to supporting all students in our classrooms, I've already outlined numerous supports that we have available for students in our

schools, ranging from mental health first aid to the mental health capacity-building initiative to rapid access counselling available in many of our communities across the province. We continue to work with school divisions on additional supports, Mr. Speaker.

But what I would like to point out is that the NDP's opposition to Bill 137, which preserves the right for parents to be involved in their child's education, their opposition to that bill falls right in line with their party's position on parental choice in education, Mr. Speaker. We've seen that Leader of the Opposition previously question funding to independent, associate, and even Catholic schools, Mr. Speaker.

And just a couple of weeks ago at their party convention, Mr. Speaker, the NDP debated a resolution from her constituency that would completely cut funding to independent schools in Saskatchewan. Is that still her position?

Mr. Speaker, opposing parental choice in education, it might fall right in line with the NDP, but not Saskatchewan parents.

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

**Mr. Teed:** — Mr. Speaker, I will remind the minister that the question was about youth suicide, specifically queer and trans youth.

Now the minister can't point to a single new resource for 2SLGBTQ+ [two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, plus] youth. These are the same youth that the Children's Advocate noted are at higher risk of suicide. In her report on the government's pronoun policy, she said, and I quote:

Suicide is the leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 24 years, and Saskatchewan often finds itself at the top of the list in this regard. Transgender and gender-diverse youth, however, are at even greater risk than the general population, being over seven times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers.

Why is the minister doing nothing to address the mental health challenges queer and trans youth are facing, challenges that this government is actively making worse?

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

[14:15]

**Hon. Mr. Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how many times I need to say it to the members opposite at this House, but I want to point again to the rapid access counselling services that we've expanded to children and youth. And, Mr. Speaker, they heckle at that.

Mr. Speaker, this is a valuable service provided by community partner organizations all across the province. I had an opportunity to be at the opening event with Catholic Family Services of the Battlefords in my hometown. We've had members in Prince Albert, in Yorkton, in Saskatoon, as we expand these services, Mr. Speaker.

For the members to heckle at these services that are available for free to children and youth in 13 communities, Mr. Speaker, that's shameful. Mr. Speaker, this opposition, they oppose parental involvement in education; they oppose parental choice in education — two things that this government will always stand for.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill No. 144 — *The Police (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2023*

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 144, *The Police (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2023* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 144 be now introduced and read a first time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

#### Bill No. 145 — *The Funeral and Cremation Services (Legal Decision-Maker Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 145, *The Funeral and Cremation Services (Legal Decision-Maker Protection) Amendment Act, 2023* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 145 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

#### Bill No. 146 — *The King's Bench Consequential Amendments Act, 2023*

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — I move that Bill No. 146, *The King's Bench Consequential Amendments Act, 2023* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 146 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Next sitting of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 143 — *The Child Care Amendment Act, 2023* *Loi modificative de 2023 sur les garderies d'enfants*

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

**Hon. Mr. Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 143, *The Child Care Amendment Act, 2023*. We as a government recognize the value of early learning and early childhood educators, and the purpose of this bill is to update the Act to be in line with the vision and objectives within the federal-provincial agreements.

The Canada-Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and the Bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement provide funding for early learning and child care programs in Saskatchewan until 2025-2026. Through these agreements, over \$1.2 billion is being provided to the early years sector to improve access to child care spaces across the province. We continue to increase spaces. We capped parent fees at \$10 a day in April of 2023. And in October 2023 we announced another wage enhancement for early childhood educators. These are all being accomplished through this funding.

These amendments to the Act demonstrate that we are committed to improving support for early childhood education programs and services for Saskatchewan families.

Section 7 outlines the requirements for the establishment of regulated child care centres. Section 10 develops requirements for the establishment of parental advisory groups. Sections 18

and 18.1 create the requirement for the issuance of child care facility licences after cancellation. Section 25 provides the minister the authority for payments and financial oversight to the following: support core child care services, to make grants to former facilities, and to make grants to or on behalf of parents respecting child care facilities that have closed.

Mr. Speaker, lastly I would just point out Section 25.1 provides the minister with authority to request data or financial information from a facility to recover overpayments and increase transparency and accountability of public funds, and to repeal outdated terminology and other drafting updates to align the Act with current practices, new requirements, and forthcoming improvements contemplated in the bilateral agreements. These amendments were identified through an internal review and through consultation with the child care sector, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to thank the Ministry of Social Services and our early learning and child care stakeholders who provided input on these amendments. The amendments will further support families, early childhood educators, and continue to help drive strong economic growth in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move therefore that Bill No. 143, *The Child Care Amendment Act, 2023* be now read a second time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved that Bill No. 143 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and enter into the debate on this piece of legislation. I thank the minister for his opening explanatory comments and second reading speech.

We've had the opportunity to talk a bit about child care access and the challenges that Saskatchewan residents are experiencing right now a bit in question period. I know our critic, my colleague from Regina Elphinstone-Centre, has done a lot of work reaching out and speaking with both parents and providers about the challenges in this sector, in particular, like I said, access to spaces as well as retention and recruitment of ECEs [early childhood educator], who do such incredible, incredible work for the children in our province, Mr. Speaker. Not enough kind words can be said about them and the incredible work that they do.

I know that, as has been said, there are some very serious challenges in terms of accessing child care across this province right now whether you live in rural or urban communities. Mr. Speaker, our hope is that these amendments will help improve the situation for Saskatchewan families.

I can speak anecdotally. My child care centre that my kids go to, there was a two-year wait-list. About a year ago there was a two-year wait-list and they've just suspended it, so they're not taking names right now for the wait-list. The wait-list doesn't exist anymore, Mr. Speaker. That's how bad access to licensed, subsidized day care spots is right now. And I know that's not an anomaly across this province.

I know that the critic, my colleague, is going to do some good work in reaching out to stakeholders to gather feedback about this legislation, and I know I have lots of other colleagues who

are looking forward to weighing in on the discussion about this bill. So I am prepared at this point to move to adjourn debate on this bill.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. Why is the member on her feet?

**Ms. Beck:** — I request leave to make an introduction.

**The Speaker:** — The member has asked for leave to make an introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to introduce a friend and colleague who's come here to join us to watch proceedings today. No stranger to most members here, although it is a bit strange to see him up in the east gallery. Of course, Mr. Speaker, I am talking about Buckley Belanger, someone whom I had the honour of serving with for a number of years, Mr. Speaker.

Buckley's worn many hats over the course of his career as a journalist, as a young mayor of Ile-a-la-Crosse, and of course as a minister in government and as a pretty darn fine member of the opposition, giving a good speech, giving a great second reading speech, and always holding the government accountable.

Mr. Speaker, Buckley served the people of this province, the people of the Northwest, for 26 years, and I think those of us who have served here know what kind of commitment that is. I think of a day like today, driving eight hours, you know, week after week to be here to serve the people back home, Mr. Speaker, that is the type of dedication and service that we should all respect and honour, and I know I certainly do.

Buckley's a proud dad, a proud grandfather, and a proud northerner who has served the people of his community in everything that he has done. I'm told, mostly by the member from Rosemont, that his prowess when it comes to hockey and fishing might be questionable, but there can be no question that his heart and his service has always been for the good of the people that he served, Mr. Speaker. I invite all members to join me in thanking him for his service and welcoming him here to his Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member on his feet?

**Mr. Vermette:** — To request leave for an introduction.

**The Speaker:** — The member has asked leave for an introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To join Leader of the Official Opposition to welcome a good friend, a colleague, a mentor, Buck Belanger. It's been an honour to mentor under Buck. He had so much wisdom and advice and guidance. And you know, he is a heck of a hockey player. I know he makes sure I talk about that.

So I just want to take the time, Buckley, for your passion that you for 26 years and your care for the people that you represented, our northern people, our Indigenous people, the northern people, you truly advocated for them from the Athabasca seat. You've done amazing work, whether you were part of government, opposition.

And I just want to say it's been an honour to serve with you. And thank you for all you've done. So with that I will ask all members of this Assembly to welcome Mr. Belanger to his Assembly and thank him for all the good work he's done. And who knows what he will do next. But I welcome you to your Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave to make an introduction.

**The Speaker:** — The member has asked leave to make an introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm kind of glad that I didn't know Buckley was going to be in the gallery, because I would have thought of an awful lot of different stories that Buckley has told over the days and years that he has served in this Legislative Assembly.

You know, first of all I'll give him a pile of credit. You know, he ran as a Liberal, was elected as a Liberal, stepped down as a Liberal and ran for the New Democratic Party. Didn't cross the floor. Put his name on the line and was elected for the New Democratic Party. And that takes a lot of nerve. And congratulations, Buckley, for serving not only on the government side but on the opposition side.

And you know, Buckley's told many a story, as I said, in this House. And one that always comes to mind is about how good of a hockey player he is. He really does talk a lot about what a great hockey player he was, and so much so that he played a couple of games with Boston — Pizza, Mr. Speaker. He told that line I think to his colleague, Maynard Sonntag, at one time.

Anyway, and there's many more stories that a person could tell. But I just want to thank Buckley for his service — and appreciate that he sat in the government benches for a little while when he first came into the House, and then for some reason was shuffled off to the opposition gallery, Mr. Speaker — but thank Buckley for his years of service in this House. And I'd far rather see him sit up there than right over there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 138

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 138 — *The Workers' Compensation (Extending Firefighter Coverage) Amendment Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet this afternoon entering into debate on Bill No. 138, *The Workers' Compensation (Extending Firefighter Coverage) Amendment Act, 2023*.

I guess you would take from that title that this is a bill that is exclusively addressing firefighter coverage. That is something that we've had the opportunity on both sides of the House to meet with firefighters about the risks that firefighters are exposed to in terms of presumptive cancers and the need for that extended coverage.

[14:30]

And so of course we are very pleased to see that that advocacy has paid off with the addition of those six new cancers to the list of occupational diseases for firefighters, as presented in this bill. I understand it is the broadest coverage in Canada. We'll cover penile, pancreatic, thyroid, laryngeal, mesothelioma, and soft-tissue sarcoma cancers.

And so certainly with, you know, the kinds of fire conditions that firefighters are exposed to, the types of combustible materials, the range of toxic materials that they're exposed to in their daily work, seeing that coverage be extended to include these six additional types of cancers is very welcome, very welcome indeed. These are our front-line heroes and put their lives on the line every day when they go to work, and truly work to protect the people of this great province.

Had it only been that, it would have been a very simple measure to, you know, consent to the passage of this legislation. But unfortunately . . . well, not necessarily unfortunately, but the government did take the opportunity to roll in some other changes and amendments that we on this side of the House absolutely must take the time to review and understand their implications — to meet with stakeholders, receive their feedback, and ensure that the normal legislative process is carried out to ensure that this is legislation that works in the best interest of all Saskatchewan people, that there aren't any unforeseen, unintended consequences or anything that's sort of been slipped in there on the side as well.

So we're always happy to do that work, closely review the legislation. I know our critic for Labour will be undertaking that work to really have a close look at these other amendments to make sure that it is truly amendments that are in the best interest of Saskatchewan people.

I will note that, as per the Act, that there is a review that does occur every five years by a committee of review, that there was a report that was published, an engagement that occurred a couple of years ago and identified 34 recommendations in four different category areas — those being policies and coverage, health and wellness, customer service and communications, and appeals. And so certainly that is an important part of the process to have those reviews come forward. It'll be important for us to look at those recommendations and compare them to the legislation to ensure that the amendments that are coming forward are reflective, or, where they're not reflective, we understand why. That we have that opportunity to put those questions to the minister to understand why certain things were or were not included in this bill.

I will note that a couple of things that are notable in these amendments include the awards for permanent functional impairment. Those are being increased over the next five years to a minimum of 4,000 and up to a maximum of 82,000, and then they'll tie in with the consumer price index starting in 2026.

My understanding is that those amounts were one of the lowest, if not the lowest, in Canada and hadn't been updated since 2003. So that seems to be a very important amendment that we'll be wanting to take a closer look at.

There's other things that, you know, need some explanation in terms of changes to the worker description, and the addition of students in some cases, the exclusion of CEOs in others. And that is something that we will have questions and want to understand.

In looking at the committee of review report, I also took note that there were some recommendations that came forward with respect to psychological injuries and stand-alone chronic pain. It's not clear to me at this time if those are reflected in the amendments. Certainly that is, you know, a complex area that it'll be necessary to understand where those recommendations might have landed.

And I guess, just perhaps one final thing that, you know, in terms of maybe a little bit of a story. Certainly I am aware that with some of the compensation for permanent functional impairment, sometimes there can be payouts and sometimes ongoing compensation that occurs. And oftentimes it's the case that, you know, someone will choose to take a payout. It may seem like the best course of action at the time, but doesn't always necessarily account for problems that may occur later in life. And it's certainly something that I'm aware has affected people in the province in the past. So just an area to watch to see how these amendments are affecting that circumstance.

But I would just say on the whole we, as mentioned already, really are happy to see the amendments that have been made extending the firefighter coverage, and something that we on both sides of the House are in agreement with.

But then of course, you know, there are other types of cancers and other occupations that could and might be seeing the same kind of risk exposure. And you know, to what extent have those considerations been considered? A couple of examples I might point to is around the risk of breast cancer in nurses and its relation to shift work. That's one area, another area being risk exposure to wildfire fighters. And certainly that's a profession

that experiences a number of the same harms, and how they are covered off. And this is an open question right now that we would have and be looking to understand that better.

So with that, I will just say that there is much here that we will want to be looking at, both in terms of the report from the committee of review and then the subsequent engagement period that happened subsequent to that. It's not clear to me at this point really what feedback came in that short time frame between November of last year and the end of January. We'll be looking for that feedback.

And with that, I will leave it to our Labour critic to further that good research and review, and conclude my remarks and adjourn debate.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 140

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 140 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter in with respect to *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2023*, Mr. Speaker. Many of these Acts, I understand, are no longer required, Mr. Speaker. Many date back to the 1920s and 1940s. We might have to ask the member from Saskatoon Southeast to give us a little bit of the history of their genesis, Mr. Speaker, some of those very early Acts, Mr. Speaker.

But a couple of the items in this that are being addressed here, Mr. Speaker, are areas that are relevant right now and clear failures of this government to recognize the Act around the education savings grant, Mr. Speaker. And here we have a government that's failing students miserably, Mr. Speaker. I mean, that Act of course would have been a measure to address affordability or assure affordability, to reduce barriers to education, but we have a minister now and a government that simply aren't supporting the sector, aren't supporting students, Mr. Speaker. And it's putting out of reach, for far too many, post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker, which has negative impacts both for young people across Saskatchewan, but for the province as a whole. We should be doing all we can to invest in education and to reduce barriers for young people to pursue higher learning, Mr. Speaker.

I'd identify as well that this eliminates the wildlife foundation Act of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We have a government that's been poor on these fronts as well. Poor in supporting hunting and fishing and trapping in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Poor in supporting conservation within the province.



So while they might deem some of the Acts obsolete, maybe those Acts no longer are required. What we do have is a government missing in action in acting in the interest of Saskatchewan people on some of these key areas like education or like hunting and fishing and trapping and conservation, Mr. Speaker.

With that being said, I know our critic and our team will be engaged with this legislation and I would simply move to adjourn debate.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 141

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 141 — *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess we have another pronoun bill here, Mr. Speaker, with respect to Bill No. 141, *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023*.

But you know, this time what we don't see in this piece of legislation, it's not the pronoun legislation we saw before where it was this divisive, regressive sowing of division within the province. This one, you know, makes a lot of sense, Mr. Speaker, and it's practical and housekeeping in nature. And it's, you know, a product of the passing of Her Majesty, Mr. Speaker, and rest in peace. And it's a shift to use more of a neutral reference, Mr. Speaker, so we don't have to update language with the passing of the sovereign, Mr. Speaker, and changes any mention of "his" or "her" to "their" to be gender neutral, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if the Minister of Education has given his consent for this or not, Mr. Speaker, but this seems to make sense, Mr. Speaker.

And I would say as well we have had someone review this legislation, and they've left a note for us as well, just that this is a significant piece of legislation and that there should be a shout-out to those that were involved in the drafting of this legislation because at first blush there appears to be very few sort of errors or mistakes within it, Mr. Speaker. So a good word to all those that have been involved in that work.

Our critic will be engaged in the days and weeks to follow, Mr. Speaker, and at this time I would simply move to adjourn debate with respect to Bill No. 141.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 142

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 142 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Utility Line Locates) Amendment Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet today to speak to Bill No. 142, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Utility Line Locates) Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker. This piece of legislation intends to prescribe the period of time for which notice has to be given to individuals who are likely to impact our Crown Corporations who have utility lines.

This is obviously an important piece of legislation as it comes to safety for private citizens and Crown employees as well, Mr. Speaker. I think there is some outreach work to be done — while it's good to have this consistency amongst all Crowns, of course — making sure that this is a time period that is achievable for landowners, for Crown employees, and that that reciprocity is there, Mr. Speaker.

You know, in working with the good people who are employed by our Crowns, I know most landowners have really, really constructive relationships, but it is still important to make sure that this period of time is applicable and still relevant, noting that of course it did use to be 48 hours, but now it has moved up to three working days' notice, which does expand that.

[14:45]

You know, again, Mr. Speaker, it is good to have consistency amongst Crowns. Good to see some good work going on at the Crowns as well, Mr. Speaker. On this side of the House of course we love and support our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, and believe they're essential not just to the healthy functioning of our economy, but to good protection for consumers, households, small businesses, and farms here in Saskatchewan as well, which is why it is such a shame that they are being consistently run into the ground by this government, Mr. Speaker.

With that I know the critic for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation] is going to be doing good work investigating this and many other things in the important work that she is undertaking. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 142.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

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

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:47.]



# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

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Saskatchewan Government Insurance  
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