



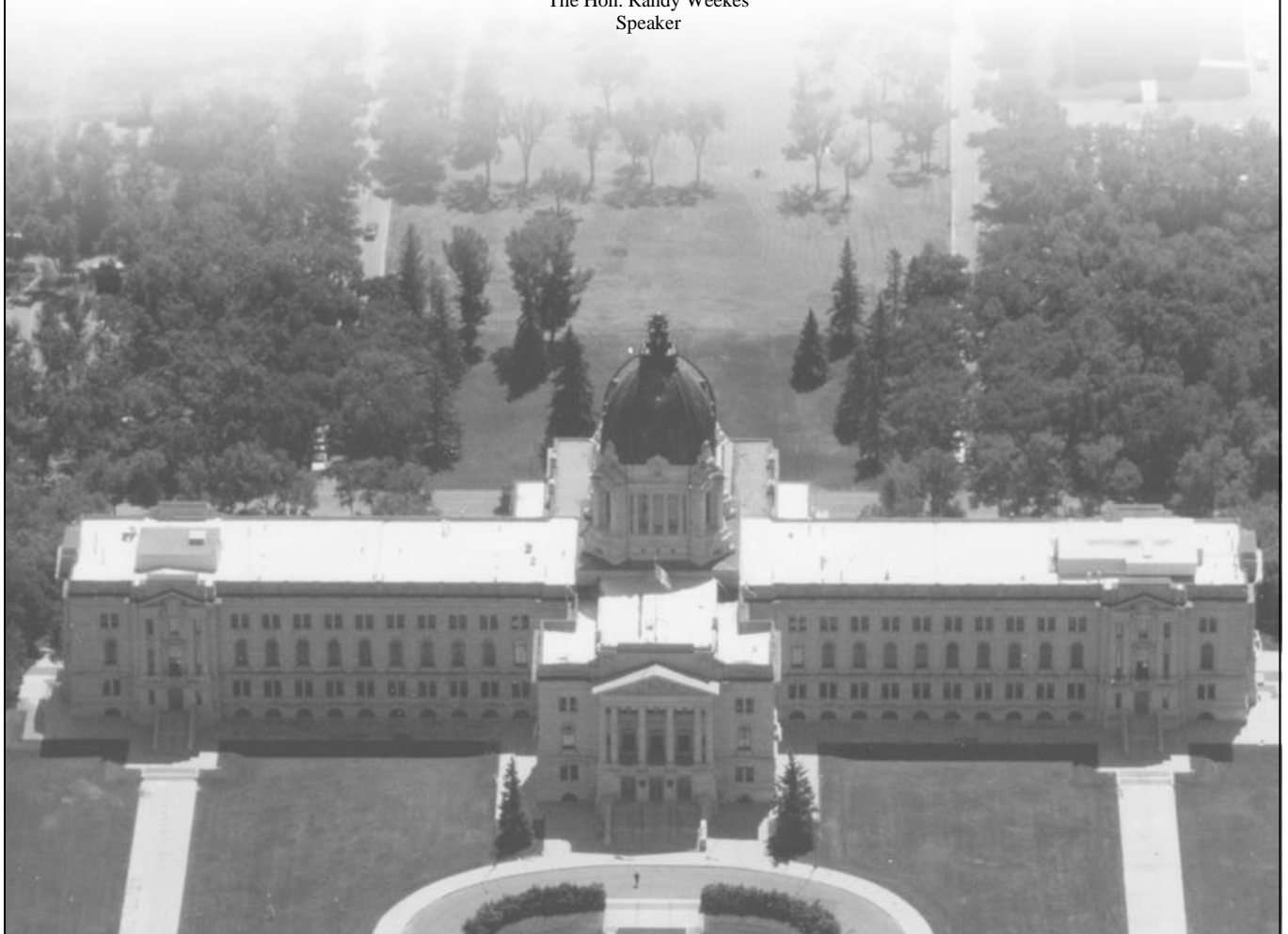
FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

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



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
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

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

Standings

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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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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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

The Speaker: — I'd just like to welcome everybody in the gallery. It's just great to see so many people out. I'd just like to remind you you're not to take part in any of the proceedings — no clapping or talking or taking pictures or videos. Thank you very much.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome to their Legislative Assembly, and seated in the Speaker's gallery, 40 people here representing three Youth4Change chapters from Saskatoon, Carry The Kettle Nakoda First Nation, and the great community of Melfort as well.

Mr. Speaker, Youth4Change, with support from Lung Saskatchewan, Heart and Stroke, and the Canadian Cancer Society, came to the legislature this past May where they hosted a rally, met with the then minister of Health at the time, the Premier, and also hosted an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] reception to advocate for stronger tobacco and vaping legislation that would protect Saskatchewan kids.

I unfortunately cannot name everyone in attendance today. However I would like to recognize a few of the folks who have joined us, Mr. Speaker: Jennifer May from Lung Saskatchewan, Carolyn Cyr with Heart and Stroke, Angeline Webb from the Canadian Cancer Society, Bethany Verma and Effie Kosmas representing Youth4Change, along with all of their colleagues, as well as nursing students from Sask Polytech who are working with Youth4Change.

Mr. Speaker, later today our government will be introducing legislation that will provide further protections for Saskatchewan school-aged youth against exposure to tobacco and vapour products. I know this group is probably very excited to see their very hard work pay off.

And, Mr. Speaker, later today after the House adjourns, I'd also point out that Youth4Change will also be hosting what they're calling a fancy sock competition in room 218 for all the MLAs. Everyone's welcome. There can only be one winner. I can see the MLAs are checking their socks right now, and we'll see who takes home the prize this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask that all members join me in welcoming Youth4Change and their chaperones who got them here safely today to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join in with the minister opposite in welcoming this delegation with Youth4Change here today. It's always a pleasure to have

you in the legislature or out front of the legislature, or you know, in room 218 putting on some fantastic receptions. It's always a highlight and brings so much energy to this space.

And I think it's so important to see young people that are involved in the political process, and I know we have a ton of young people in the galleries here today. I want to thank you for participating in democracy, for standing up for your fellow students, and for being leaders within your communities.

I also want to thank all of the adult chaperones that the minister introduced, for all of your hard work in seeing this through. I know it's not always easy to coordinate with folks in government or in opposition to make things like this happen. So I want to thank you for your continued advocacy and welcome you today as the minister introduces Bill 147. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce three guests in your gallery over on the west side from Access Communications here in Yorkton. We had a nice lunch earlier and visited a little bit.

To introduce them to you, Arlie Matisho is on the right, a former Yorkton boy; he's the commercial relationship manager. On the far left is Darcy Porter, general sales manager. In between them, no longer with Access, former CEO [chief executive officer] and president of 40 years, Jim Deane. He was recently celebrated for a lifetime of commitment and co-operation, visionary leadership, and dedication to community by presenting him with a Lifetime Co-operative Achievement Award. These awards took place on October 16th of '23 in Saskatoon as part of Co-op Week celebrations.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to welcome these guests to their Legislative Assembly, but also thank Jim for his years of dedication and commitment to community and also for his accomplishments throughout his career. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join with the member opposite, on behalf of the official opposition, to recognize Arlie, Darcy, and Jim in their Assembly, to recognize Access in their Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and to give a real special shout-out to Jim Deane, who led Access to incredible success and incredible impact in this province for many years, him and his team.

And Access obviously assists communities by way of connectivity and connecting Saskatchewan, and they play such a role as well in telling the proud story and community stories of Saskatchewan. And I love, of course, their coverage of the Regina Pats, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the member opposite and ask all members to welcome them all here today and to celebrate Jim Deane for his legacy of service to this province.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I want to recognize several leaders of labour seated in your gallery today. We have Tracey Sauer here, the president of SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union]; joined with Diane Ralph, the first vice-president of SGEU; Ellen Paulley, also of SGEU. We have Jason Hicks, the interim president of COPE 397 [Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union 397], and Taylor Apperley representing the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour]. The president of the SFL, Lori Johb, is storm-stayed today. I'm not sure if you know this, Mr. Speaker, yet, but the roads are pretty treacherous out there in Saskatchewan today.

So there are many other labour leaders who are here in spirit, not in person. They're interested to see another bill that's being introduced today — Bill 613, the fairer workplaces, better jobs Act. Very happy to have them here today and we ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite and welcome those leaders from the different respective labour unions, Mr. Speaker — Tracey, Diane, Colleen, Jason, and Taylor, and those that couldn't make it.

I've had the opportunity to meet with a couple of them and actually had some good conversations — some conversations not about labour or workplace safety at all — but certainly some good conversations and some things that we found in common away from work, which is always nice.

But thank you for the work that you do each and every day. We are looking forward to hearing what the opposition has to say when they introduce their bill, and we'll have more to say on that in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request 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.

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to stand in this Chamber and join with my colleague the member from Regina Douglas Park, in welcoming a very special someone to his Legislative Assembly today, someone who is no stranger to many of us on this side of the aisle. Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to welcome my constituency assistant, Jason Hicks.

Jason and I have served alongside each other since shortly after the Meewasin by-election. But, Mr. Speaker, Jason has deep roots in the riding of Saskatoon Meewasin, has deep roots in the

Saskatchewan NDP [New Democratic Party], and deep roots in the labour community of Saskatchewan, having served the folks in our labour community for many years, and also serving the people of Saskatoon Meewasin and the Saskatchewan NDP for many years as the constituency assistant for my colleague from Saskatoon Fairview. He served there just before coming to Saskatoon Meewasin.

And then before that, Mr. Speaker, Jason served alongside our former leader Ryan Meili in his role as the previous MLA for Saskatoon Meewasin. And if my memory is correct, he also served the people of Saskatoon Meewasin a few years ago working in the cabinet office here in Regina for a former Saskatoon Meewasin MLA, Frank Quennell. So, Mr. Speaker, someone who has deep roots in both the labour and . . . Sorry, my colleagues remind me that he also served one of my colleagues, a former MLA, Danielle Chartier, in between that. So someone with deep roots.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I've said in this Chamber in the past, it's a deep honour to serve alongside Jason. And I really feel that the people of Saskatoon Meewasin are so, so lucky for having him in their corner. Jason is known to always go to bat for folks. No matter their background, no matter their political stripe, when they show up in our office he's working for them. Mr. Speaker, Jason works tirelessly for vulnerable communities, folks who are coming in with issues with social services or health care or need housing access, Mr. Speaker.

And I would be remiss to say that I do miss him because at the moment — as my colleague introduced him as the interim president of COPE 397 — Jason is currently on leave, serving in that role. They always say some are born to greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them, but in this case I can honestly say that both apply to Jason, Mr. Speaker. Just an absolute gem of a human. I think that the opportunity and challenge of this interim presidency is so well deserved because I know that Jason has the best interests of every single member of COPE 397 as he takes on this leadership role with great decorum.

And while I have a really fantastic interim CA [constituency assistant] in McGinnis Reeve who we're so happy to have in the office, I just want to say that we both miss you very much and we hope that you will one day return to the Saskatoon Meewasin offices because I don't know what I would do without you in that office at this point. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask all members to join me in welcoming Jason to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of this Assembly, I'd like to introduce to you, in the west gallery, 56 grade 8 and 9 students from the great school of Jack MacKenzie Elementary in Regina. Accompanying them today is Kristopher Jan, Claire Castle, and Hailie Pennington. I look forward to the questions you may have after we're finished today. And I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I request 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.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members, I would like to take this opportunity to just briefly welcome a handful of absolutely remarkable young people to this their Legislative Assembly.

Seated behind me in the western-most gallery, we have three wonderful young people from the University of Regina who are here as part of a justice studies class, and who are also proud and active members of the UR NDP [University of Regina New Democrats] campus club. We've got Aliyah Schiller, Mariana Ortiz, and Marissa Kakakaway seated here. They're just absolutely astonishing young people.

Their commitment to social justice, to their institution, to bettering their community and making this province a fairer, a more prosperous, and a more just place is absolutely amazing. The amount of things that these young people balance in addition to their studies is nothing short of astonishing, and I'm just pleased as punch to be able to welcome you here as your host MLA.

I would also, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, like to just very briefly mention two people seated in the eastern-most gallery. We've got Justin Passmore and Kaitlyn Stadnyk. I know Kaitlyn's likely to get another much more articulate introduction, Mr. Speaker.

But these two young people have spent many, many afternoons canvassing with me, knocking on doors, learning about what fundamentally I think we all believe is the best part of elected life — connecting with people in our constituencies and sharing that really special relationship that develops when you have the opportunity to knock on doors. And that trust that you build with people and the remarkable things that citizens in this province will share with you when you show up at their door and ask them how they're doing and what they care about.

[13:45]

These two are just some of the best and just wonderful at connecting with people. Wonderful stories of their own, and I'm just so pleased to see them here and ask all members to join me in welcoming them to this their legislature.

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to this Assembly, I am thrilled to introduce to you a group of 45 grade 9 students in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker, from the awesome community of Rosetown.

Mr. Speaker, they are accompanied by their teachers John

McPhee and Emmett Wisse. Mr. Speaker, I understand, as everybody I think in the Assembly knows, they travelled on some pretty difficult road conditions coming down this morning. I'm delighted to have them here. Not very often because of travelling distance that I get school groups from my constituency.

I'm very much looking forward to meeting with them after question period, and I would ask all members to please give them a warm welcome to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to start by saying welcome to all the guests here in the gallery today. It is wonderful to see so many people here to watch what's going on in their Legislative Assembly.

I want to send a special shout-out to someone who's already been mentioned, Mr. Speaker, seated in the east gallery and that is Kaitlyn Stadnyk, of course also known as our candidate in Lumsden-Morse in the most recent by-election. And at the risk of offending everyone on my team, Mr. Speaker, I will say her nomination speech really was the best nomination speech I have ever heard. And the way that she talked about her love of this province and how proud she was of her rural roots was an inspiration I think to everyone in the room, and something that gives me a great amount of optimism when I think of the participation of young people, all of those here today, in the political process.

Mr. Speaker, the future definitely is bright in this province when we look at these young people and folks like Kaitlyn. I invite all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I present the following petition.

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: whereas the Trudeau Liberal-NDP 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:

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 remove the carbon tax from all home heating costs across Canada to reduce inflation and to drive down the rising cost of living faced by all Canadians from coast to coast, Mr. Speaker.

The below undersigned are residents of Regina and Prince Albert. I so do present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition supporting our private member's bill to establish safe access zones for Saskatchewan abortion facilities. Those who are accessing abortion services and the staff have the right to do so without encountering verbal abuse or harassment. Safe access zones around facilities that provide abortion services will ensure that patients and staff are safe and free from this discrimination and harassment.

Currently in Canada, six provinces have already passed bubble-zone legislation. And this includes British Columbia in 1995, which may sound like just yesterday but was 28 years ago, Mr. Speaker. It's time for us to get with it.

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 pass legislation to establish safe access zones for Saskatchewan abortion facilities.

This is signed by individuals from Maple Creek and Regina, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to fix the rural health care staffing crisis.

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: recruitment and retention of health care professionals is a particular issue in Saskatchewan's rural health care facilities, leading to many emergency room, acute, lab, and X-ray service disruptions.

The ongoing pandemic has created burnout and led to early retirements and resignations, which has rippling effects on small cities and towns. Health care workers and their families are valuable assets in Saskatchewan communities and local economies. And in 2021 SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention, over 94 per cent of rural leaders voted to support a resolution acknowledging that nursing and health care worker shortage across Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, my office continues to be inundated with requests asking us as MLAs to fix this crisis.

I will 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 fix the rural health care staffing crisis.

Mr. Speaker, the undersigned reside in Delisle and Maymont.

I do so submit.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today again to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly calling for the funding of in vitro fertilization treatments. Mr. Speaker, one in six couples in Canada will struggle with infertility, and IVF [in vitro fertilization] treatments are prohibitively expensive, Mr. Speaker. Before the cost of drugs, before the cost of travel, before any of those, each cycle can typically cost up to \$10,000. And, Mr. Speaker, these are 2020 numbers. I'm sure much like everything, this cost has only continued to increase.

Despite public health care being a right in Canada and despite this being a health condition, there is no government financial support for individuals requiring fertility treatments. Saskatchewan people's ability to conceive, to grow their families, should not depend on their socio-economic status, Mr. Speaker. This is the right thing to do. It's the compassionate thing to do, and it also makes economic sense. Other provinces in Canada have invested in individuals, have invested in families, creating programs that financially assist those struggling with infertility.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately move to cover the financial burden of two rounds of IVF treatments for Saskatchewan people experiencing infertility.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition today reside in Weyburn and Midale. I do so submit.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling on the government to address the affordability crisis. The undersigned residents would like to bring to the attention the following: that inflation is the highest it has been in more than three decades; that half of Saskatchewan residents were living paycheque to paycheque before transportation and food costs skyrocketed in 2022; and that the Sask Party government's 32 new tax hikes and fee hikes make life more expensive, all while harming a number of industries in this province, Mr. Speaker.

As someone who knocked on hundreds of doors in Regina Walsh Acres, affordability was the number one issue door after door, and so this is a really important issue for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

I'll 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 meaningfully address the affordability crisis in the province.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories today reside in Regina. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise yet again today to present another petition calling for the improvement of labour laws in Saskatchewan. Those who have signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: that after the October 1st increase, Saskatchewan's minimum wage remains the lowest in Canada at \$14 an hour. As well the 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.

In addition, 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.

Those who have signed this petition come from Saskatoon and Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

National Indigenous Veterans Day

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to be on my feet to recognize and honour Indigenous veterans who have served our country during this National Indigenous Veterans Day. This day was specially set aside in 1994 for Indigenous veterans as they were not being recognized during November 11 Remembrance Day activities with the rest of Canada's veterans — not being recognized in spite of the many obstacles Indigenous peoples had to overcome, which included travelling long distances to enlist and learning to speak new languages.

Mr. Speaker, as we reflect on this day, we remember those whose lives were lost or forever changed and acknowledge the loved ones, families, and communities that have been left behind. Indigenous peoples have fought in the First and Second World Wars, Korea, and other armed forces efforts around the world, including NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and UN [United Nations] peacekeeping efforts.

There are many folks that we should thank, we should take some time to learn about on this day, such as Willard Bolduc, an Ojibwe airman from Ontario that earned the Distinguished Flying Cross; Huron Brant; David Greyeyes; and many more.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to all our Indigenous veterans, both those now gone and those with us today. Join me in the remembrance of those who served and honour the more than 2,700 Indigenous people who continue to serve in Canada's military.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lumsden-Morse.

Sod-Turning for New School in Stewart Valley

Mr. B. McLeod: — Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Friday, August 22nd, 2022 was a devastating day for the community of Stewart Valley, located 25 minutes north of Swift Current. You see, Mr. Speaker, that was the day that lightning struck the K [kindergarten] to grade 8 school and a fire quickly started. Fortunately no one was in the building at the time. And even though there was a very quick response from firefighters, the building was a complete loss.

Mr. Speaker, there is a great adage that typifies the people of Saskatchewan: when the going gets tough, the tough get going. The Chinook School Division had to quickly identify and secure choices for the students to attend school for the 2022-23 school year. And I'm happy to report that I was able to be with the community of Stewart Valley on November 1st to celebrate the sod-turning ceremony to build a new school that will replicate the previous existing footprint for like, kind, and quality as well as all the required code upgrades.

Since the fire, the community of Stewart Valley has raised over \$100,000 that will be added to the construction effort to allow for a larger kitchen and an enhanced spectator seating area in the gymnasium. Everyone is looking forward to cheering on the next generation of Stewart Valley Stingers and celebrating community events in the new school.

Mr. Speaker, I would invite the whole House to join me in congratulating the community of Stewart Valley on the start of construction, and we look forward to the full completion of this new school. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Remembering Tom Conway

Mr. Burki: — It is my honour to rise today in recognition of an honoured member of the United Steelworkers union. The union has more than 200 members all across Canada. They have 15 local unions in Saskatchewan, and they have represented workers across many diverse job industries including miners, public sectors, nurses, and many more. They have been advocating for a better life for workers and their families since 1930.

On September 25th, Tom Conway, the international president of United Steelworkers, passed away after a long and dedicated career spent fighting for rights of workers and their families. Tom exemplified the values of the unions. He recognized the working

people built this province and the country as a whole; they deserve fair and safe treatment. He was constantly fighting for better wages and safe conditions. He was fighting against government cuts and strike intervention.

Tom is no longer with us, but that fight carries on. I invite all members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in celebration of the life of international president, Tom Conway.

[14:00]

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

National Indigenous Veterans Day

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Saturday is Remembrance Day in Canada, a time to reflect upon the sacrifices made by our bravest. Today is National Indigenous Veterans Day, a day to remember those from the Indigenous community who served our great nation.

Mr. Speaker, Indigenous veterans deserve a particular place of remembrance during this time. Status First Nations under treaty are exempt from conscription. This didn't stop many Indigenous people from willingly volunteering to serve the nation of Canada and defending freedom across the world during the Second World War. Approximately 1,000 Indigenous people enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces during this conflict.

And this legacy of service continues today with younger generations of Indigenous Canadians, Canadians like Private Carter Eyahpaise, a 21-year-old from Beardy's and Okemasis Cree Nation, who was featured in an article by the Canadian Press this week. Carter is a recent graduate of the Bold Eagle program and is the great-grandson of Stanley Eyahpaise. Stanley gave his life in the fight against Hitler when he was killed in France following his participation in the Juno Beach assault on Normandy. Mr. Speaker, Carter is now a member of the Saskatchewan regiment of the Forces near his home reserve.

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, thank you to all current and former Indigenous members of the Armed Forces of Canada for your service to our nation. Thank you.

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

First Graduation Class of Firefighters at Suncrest College

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Suncrest College has only been recognized as a professional learning institute for less than five months, but its first graduation class was able to walk the stage on Friday, October 27th. Joined by the member from Yorkton and local and provincial dignitaries, we observed Platoon #19, the graduating class of the firefighter National Fire Protection Association or NFPA 1001 program, and they took home more than just their certifications. The group now has the title as the first course to receive certification under Suncrest College.

Suncrest College was established in 2023 as a result of merging with Cumberland College and Parkland College. The program

curriculum, provided in co-operation with the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, exceeds NFPA requirements, including more practice runs and hands-on activities at the Saskatchewan Emergency Response Institute near Melville. This training is widely endorsed by fire departments as a necessary credential for new hires. In total 14 students are now considered professional firefighters thanks to the program which runs 24 weeks.

Mr. Speaker, combined investment by the Ministry of Advanced Education, the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training, and the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency this year totalled \$1.79 million, and it enabled Suncrest College to reinvigorate the professional firefighting training program.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members in the Assembly to join me in recognizing Suncrest College's first graduating class, and wish them well in their new careers as professional firefighters.

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

Expansion of Rapid Access Counselling Services for Youth

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 18th our government announced the expansion of free rapid counselling services for children, youth, and their caregivers. I was pleased to be part of this announcement at Catholic Family Services in Prince Albert, making them the ninth location in the province in helping to address mental health issues facing many young people today.

The ability to quickly connect with young people when in need is crucial for tackling many mental health issues. Our government remains committed to improving mental health services in Saskatchewan. Rapid access counselling for children will expand to all 24 locations of Family Service Saskatchewan that currently provide this service to adults.

Our government recognizes that mental health and addictions are a growing challenge across our province and Canada, which is why we have made record investments for mental health and addictions services in 2023-24. I congratulate the staff at Family Services for the wonderful work they do to provide these valuable programs.

Catholic Family Services have been serving members of my community in Prince Albert, regardless of their religion or age, and will now be administering rapid access counselling for youth. This expansion of services will make a difference to these young people who urgently need access to professional support, and will positively impact our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Government's Record over 16 Years

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, 16 years ago this morning a new day dawned in Saskatchewan. Gone were the gloomy NDP clouds that hung over the province far too long. Gone were the days of people fleeing for opportunities elsewhere. Gone was the defeatist NDP attitude. Gone were the days of believing we would always be in and out of equalization. Gone was the acceptance of mediocrity, Mr. Speaker, because hope beat fear.

A new exciting positive day began and a new attitude took hold in our great province. Then we got to work. We gave people with disabilities dignity with the creation of SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability]. We increased the seniors' income plan. Seniors had now been neglected by the NDP for over a decade. We gave students learning spaces by building school after school after school. We started to fix the disaster in health care the NDP left in rural Saskatchewan, and we built many new health care facilities.

We fixed roads. We built bridges. We gave homeowners fairness and predictability on their property taxes. We took 112,000 people, low-income residents, off of the provincial tax roll and lowered income taxes for everyone else. We axed the NDP bill that would allow the potash industry to be nationalized and made sure investors had confidence in our province once again.

A new attitude dawned 16 years ago, Mr. Speaker, both in the people of Saskatchewan and in their government because, Mr. Speaker, on that morning, hope beat fear.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Implementation of Administrative Information Management System

Ms. Beck: — Well, Mr. Speaker, they sure ain't what they used to be. This tired and out-of-touch government isn't focused on the things that matter most, not focused on helping people with the cost of living, not focused on our kids' classrooms, and certainly not focused on the crisis in our health care system.

Now instead of investing to provide the supports the people need, they're wasting hundreds of millions of dollars on their own wasteful pet projects. Mr. Speaker, remember the AIMS [administrative information management system] project? That's the IT [information technology] fiasco that this government had to put on hold one year ago today. And last we heard, \$138 million for a system that still doesn't work.

What's the total cost so far, and when will AIMS finally be up and running?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to the AIMS project, our primary concern is that the 48,000 employees across the health care system continue to be scheduled and paid on time and correctly, Mr. Speaker.

Work is ongoing to rectify the issues that were encountered during the initial rollout, Mr. Speaker. There's been extensive user engagement that has taken place, Mr. Speaker. User feedback guides have been working towards ensuring that the project meets the needs of the users.

And again, Mr. Speaker, this is a significant, significant IT project for the health system to ensure that our very valuable health care employees are paid, paid correctly, and paid on time, Mr. Speaker, for the valuable work that they do across Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, we're very assured that our hard-working health care workers are actually getting paid. But Mr. Speaker, it's been a year, 138 million and counting, and still nothing to show for it.

These are dollars that could have been directed to fixing the staffing crisis in rural communities, could have been put into mental health and addictions, and could have been put to use ensuring that the 1,100 folks who needed a local ambulance actually got one. But instead, instead, Mr. Speaker, this government is pouring public dollars into costly projects that simply don't work. With all the problems in our health care system today, how can this tired and out-of-touch government justify 138 million and counting for a system that still doesn't work?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The administrative information management system, AIMS, will replace roughly 80 systems — 80 separate systems, some of which are more than 50 years old, Mr. Speaker — currently used by the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority], by eHealth, by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, 3sHealth [Health Shared Services Saskatchewan], affiliates and health foundations.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know what the members opposite, what would they prefer to do, Mr. Speaker? Would they have us continue to use a spread of 80 different networks and health care systems across the province, some that are half a century old, Mr. Speaker? You have to invest into technology to make sure that we're improving the data access in health care that's delivered by our health care workers and our health care teams across this province, Mr. Speaker.

Again this is a very important project. Going to ensure that we get it right so that the people that this serves are paid and that they are remunerated for the work that they do, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — The minister is asking for suggestions. Here's one: don't pour \$138 million into a program that doesn't work to this day.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many places that 138 million could be better spent, but instead of focusing on providing health care to people who need it, this tired and out-of-touch government has wasted that money on an IT program that again a year later still doesn't work.

So what is the total cost of this mismanaged project? And when will we actually see it up and running?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Again, Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, this is a significant IT project for the Government of Saskatchewan, for our health care system, again paying 48,000 people that work in our health care sector across our province, trying to replace 80 separate systems to better coordinate them,

Mr. Speaker, so that they are working and they're able to, you know, essentially talk to each other, as I said previously, some that are more than 50 years old, Mr. Speaker. And we want to ensure that when the system is launched that it works properly, it works accordingly, that it does what it's supposed to do, Mr. Speaker.

And I still have yet to hear from the members opposite and the Leader of the Opposition what it is they would do differently.

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

Government Attendance at Conference of Parties 28

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, clearly \$138 million and counting on an IT system that doesn't work is unacceptable. But you know, Mr. Speaker, this isn't the only place that this government is showing questionable spending judgment.

On October 18th of this year, the Premier authorized more than three-quarters of a million dollars for a pavilion at the COP28 [Conference of Parties 28] conference. And, Mr. Speaker, that is just the price of admission. That doesn't count hotels, staff, travel costs, and all the other costs that go along with sending the Premier and his entourage to COP28.

Mr. Speaker, how does the Premier justify spending so much public money on this expensive trip to Dubai?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you what this government and this Premier are going to do, and that is stand up for the interests of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And I can also tell you who will not be standing up for the interests of Saskatchewan: Justin Trudeau, Steven Guilbeault, and Jagmeet Singh, all of whom when they travel do nothing but attack our industries, do nothing but apologize for what we do in this province. If we are not out there, Mr. Speaker, telling our story with our companies, standing up for our industries, nobody else is going to.

And all we have heard from the NDP on this, Mr. Speaker, is that they will shut down all of our international offices. They have committed to never leaving the province to support our industries and our companies internationally, Mr. Speaker, except for their member for Nutana, Mr. Speaker. Let me read this quote from their member for Nutana: "It's also disappointing that our Premier did not see the importance of representing Saskatchewan at this international forum." What was that about? It was about COP.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina University.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let's be crystal clear. Saskatchewan has a great story to tell. Our producers, our exporters, our manufacturers are some of the best in the world. But it's passing strange, Mr. Speaker, that suddenly this government wants to spend a million dollars of public money to go to the United Nations climate change conference.

Saskatchewan people work hard for their money, Mr. Speaker, and they deserve investments in health care and cost of living, not million-dollar jet setting for the Premier and the minister to Dubai. How does the minister justify spending nearly \$1 million of public money on one conference in Dubai?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Exhibit A for why the NDP have no credibility. They have their member for Nutana standing up, demanding that we go to COP, Mr. Speaker. I read the quote: "It's disappointing that our Premier did not see the importance of representing Saskatchewan at this important international forum." We now have this member standing up, outraged that we are going to the same event that they were demanding that we attend, Mr. Speaker. We are not going to apologize for going to COP.

[14:15]

We are not going to apologize for defending the interests of this province and our industries internationally. We are not going to apologize for that, because we know that neither they nor Justin Trudeau nor Steven Guilbeault will ever say a good thing about our province and our industries.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The outrage machine is in full flight today. But let's look at what \$765,000 — that's just the cover charge, Mr. Speaker — is going to get the people of Saskatchewan. This is, quote, from the website:

The Green Zone offers a platform to non-accredited delegates including youth groups, civil society, NGOs, the private sector, and Indigenous groups to have their voices heard promoting dialogue and awareness about climate action.

So, Mr. Speaker, what part of the government's plan for climate action is he going to be sharing? Is it the part where the Premier says he doesn't care about climate change, or the part where they laugh it off or groan or wiggle and giggle every single time it's brought up in this Assembly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well I can tell you what we're going to be talking about, which is how we produce the most responsible, the most sustainable resources, food and fuel production, of anywhere in the world, Mr. Speaker.

That is what we are going to be talking about. That's what we have been talking about around the world, about Saskatchewan being that reliable, sustainable partner for the long term for countries looking to source their commodities from elsewhere than Russia or Belarus or other countries, Mr. Speaker, that are not friendly necessarily like we are here in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

We also know that that's working. What have we seen, Mr.

Speaker? Over 19,000 jobs created over the course of the last year, many of those directly related to the growth in our exports which have been at record levels, Mr. Speaker, over \$53 billion of exports last year.

What do we hear from the NDP? Nothing, other than they're going to shut down our entire international office network and never engage internationally again.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister is already spending millions of dollars on trade offices in Dubai, and now he wants to spend a million dollars more on the most expensive junket in the history of Saskatchewan. Talk about tired and out of touch, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people are living through a cost-of-living crisis, and this government is offering zero relief.

Why? Why all of this additional money for a booth at a trade show when we're already spending public dollars on those trade offices?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — You know what, Mr. Speaker? The utter economic cluelessness of the NDP I think surprises even people on this side of the House some days.

On the one hand, you have literally their member sitting across the aisle from that member demanding that Saskatchewan attend COP28. Demanding it. And then you have this member standing up and the Leader of the Opposition condemning the government for attending COP28. Get your story straight. At least have a conversation with each other about what your position is, Mr. Speaker.

We are going to be attending. We're going to be telling the story of the most sustainable, reliable energy, food, and fuel production in the entire planet because it benefits Saskatchewan. It benefits our public. It benefits our workers. Nineteen thousand more people working, \$50 billion in export — it's working, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Mr. Speaker, you can tell a government is tired and out of touch when they think they're entitled to their entitlements. This trade show junket is going to cost the taxpayers of the province \$5,000 an hour, \$61,000 per day, and close to a million dollars when you factor in travel, accommodation, security — all of the things that go into this.

Instead of taking a holiday to Dubai on the public dime, the Premier and the minister should be putting those dollars into the things that matter to people: surgeries, ambulances, housing, cost-of-living relief. The list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

Does the minister really want his legacy to be that he led the charge on the most expensive foreign trip in Saskatchewan's

history?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, their Environment critic stands up and demands that we don't go to COP. And then they're outraged about having a pavilion at COP, Mr. Speaker. That is the cost of having a pavilion at COP. I'm not sure what their plan was, Mr. Speaker, if they intended on just going, standing on the street corner, and yelling about how great Saskatchewan was.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, that we have a space where we're going to be able to host 40 companies and institutions that are coming with the government to tell their story as well, Mr. Speaker, their story about how they are the most sustainable production of whatever industry they're in, whether that be in the ag sector, whether that be in the mining sector, whether that be in the energy sector. These are going to be some of the biggest companies that operate in this province that are accompanying the government and are grateful for the opportunity to be there to tell their story, Mr. Speaker.

We know the NDP hate that. We know what their position is. They'd shut down international offices. They'd never travel internationally. They'd never engage.

Mr. Speaker, our position is completely the opposite. We're going to engage. We're going to have trade offices because it benefits people here in Saskatchewan.

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

Provision of Social Services Supports

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, it's not that they're going to COP. It's how they're going to COP. A \$1 million junket is not . . . And they don't even think that they should be made to explain that expenditure of public money. That's how deep the entitlement runs with this government.

Mr. Speaker, their waste and mismanagement is going international, but back here in Saskatchewan the problems are still piling up. Take mismanagement of IT in Social Services. The Linkin program was originally supposed to cost 15 million over three years. Total cost to date, Mr. Speaker, 75 million, and it does a fraction of what it's supposed to do. How much more has this government wasted on this failed project to date, and how much is it going to cost the people of Saskatchewan when it's all said and done?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Linkin system, and as well as right across Social Services, Mr. Speaker, we use IT. There is a lot of clients that we have interactions with each and every single day on the income assistance side, child and family side, Mr. Speaker. We made investments several years ago, but we've added on to those base programs, Mr. Speaker. There's ongoing costs related to maintenance of those projects, and so that work continues, Mr. Speaker.

We're not going back to the days of the NDP when they weren't sure where children were or where they were when they moved around the province, Mr. Speaker. We're going to make investments in IT so it's easier for caseworkers to deal with those most vulnerable people in our province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Seventy-five million for this IT project, Mr. Speaker. Meanwhile they're not even taking care of basics. Earlier this week we had community-based workers here in the legislature who don't earn a decent wage because of this government's underfunding, incompetence, and misplaced priorities. Some of these folks have worked in the addictions field, Mr. Speaker, for 30 years and they don't even make \$20 an hour.

With so many people earning so little, does the minister agree those dollars, that 75 million or some of it, could have been better used paying those people a decent wage, for example?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, I was happy to meet with the CBO [community-based organization] sector, and of course we rely on them. They're very valuable to our province and some of our most vulnerable citizens out there, Mr. Speaker. Of course we don't pay them directly. They're not government employees. We pay the community-based organizations a set rate based on the hours of work, and so we buy that service from them. It's up to the CBOs to be able to interact with the individuals in those jobs, Mr. Speaker. We're not the only funding source. We are the major funding source, for sure.

We've been able to come up, over several years, 52 per cent for example since we've become government, and as well the 3 per cent lifts that we've been able to come up with because we realize how important that the work that they do, Mr. Speaker. Every time we bring that forward in each budget that we need appropriation for however, unfortunately the NDP vote against it.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the list of ways this government is wasting money in Social Services is unfortunately long, and this is just the mismanagement in Social Services that we know about. I can't get, you know, answers to my questions now from estimates six months later. Things the minister undertook to provide, still haven't received some of them. It begs the question, what are they hiding, Mr. Speaker?

You know, because of the failed 75 million Linkin project, this government shelled out 25 million for the MiCase program. That was the program to support the failed SIS [Saskatchewan income support] program, Mr. Speaker. Failure after failure after failure from this tired and out-of-touch government, and the taxpayer is left picking up the tab. Families struggle more and more, and the most vulnerable in our province go without the supports that they need.

When will the incompetence end with this Sask Party government? When will they stop wasting so much public money and make sure people actually get the supports that they need and deserve?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Perhaps a little history will help the members opposite understand the system in Social Services and how it started. It started because of a report by the Children's Advocate that said there was 21 kids in one foster home — 21 kids. And the report was called *A Breach of Trust*, Mr. Speaker.

And also it brought to my attention at the time that there was absolutely no electronic tracking of kids. The kids' files were just paper files in a file box. They say we're all old and out of touch. That's out of touch. And the NDP system was children were just files, and so if the family moved, the files just stayed and they restarted from scratch. That was totally, totally irresponsible.

So that is where the system started. It's evolved over a number of years now, over a decade. It doesn't just manage children in care any longer. Social Services has expanded it. So to make it sound like it started in this one area and didn't grow is mistaken information.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, I know it's been a while since the Finance minister has moved on from Social Services, but she should know that in addition to having a \$75 million Linkin program, that government also has a record number of children in care and recently set a high-water mark for children who are dying or getting critically injured in care. So that is a bit much, Mr. Speaker.

We also see hundreds of millions wasted when it comes to our Sask Housing stock. It's not just IT, Mr. Speaker. Thousands and thousands of housing units across this province sit vacant and neglected because of this government's mismanagement, more than 600 million worth of public assets that are providing zero housing to zero people. It's an obscene waste and this government should be working day and night to get people into those units.

When will this minister stop with the mismanagement and focus on getting supports to the people that need them?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, in terms of the housing corporation, Mr. Speaker, we work very hard to connect those who are able to live independently in communities right across the province. We have partnerships with third-party organizations that deliver supported living. We're going to continue to work in that area. The announcement we made a couple of weeks ago is indicative of that.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is a little bit confused, I believe, in terms of her interpretation. She came out with a bit of a report about the housing situation, Mr. Speaker. There's a difference between replacement costs, Mr. Speaker, and present

value. So the numbers she's quoting aren't quite accurate. She cherry-picked information from 2011 where there was one-time stimulus funding from the federal government requiring matching.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we certainly haven't underfunded the housing corporation. Seventy million dollars a year in investments on maintenance and improvements, Mr. Speaker. More in the next question.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, those thousands of vacant units still need light and power. And when you add the cost of forgone rent, this government has cost Saskatchewan people nearly 200 million over the last decade alone because they can't manage their own portfolio. These units should be providing housing to real people and those dollars should be providing real supports, not wasted because this government refuses to act.

When will this tired and out-of-touch government, when will this tired and out-of-touch minister stop wasting millions on IT, millions on empty housing units, millions on our housing stock, Mr. Speaker, and start taking care of the basics in the Ministry of Social Services?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite forgot to mention the cost to bring those units back up to acceptable levels, right.

[14:30]

So, Mr. Speaker, we'll work on that continually, Mr. Speaker. There is a cost to that for sure. We're doing that all the time. Recently I had an announcement just here in Regina of 89 units just coming on board, Mr. Speaker, for families to be able to get into those units and find a home, Mr. Speaker. That work is happening all across our province, and that work is going to continue. 375 units currently under construction that will help our most vulnerable here in our province, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of vacancies, we're making progress on that with innovative approaches. We're going to continue to do that, Mr. Speaker, but we're not going to force people to move like the NDP seem to want, Mr. Speaker. We're not going to put people with serious mental health and addictions issues in with seniors, for example. I think that's what the NDP wants to do.

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

Mental Health Services for Youth

Ms. Sarauer: — You know, as the Leader of the Opposition said earlier today, they ain't what they used to be, Mr. Speaker. It used to be that a serious question about youth suicide in this Chamber would elicit a serious response from these ministers. It's evident that those days for this government are long gone.

To the Minister of Education, who we've heard some folks on

that side see him as the face of the future of the Sask Party: now that his government has chosen to use the notwithstanding clause to infringe on the Charter rights of vulnerable children, does he feel that having rapid access counselling specific for youth in only 13 communities is sufficient? And does he understand that mental health first aid training is insufficient to meet the needs that exist, especially now, thanks to this government's actions?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think I can speak for every member of this government when I say that youth suicide is an issue that we take very seriously in this government, Mr. Speaker. As I've outlined in the past, Mr. Speaker, we've added numerous supports in our schools, Mr. Speaker, whether that's mental health first aid or mental health capacity-building initiative. There are a number of divisions which are also expanding to all school divisions around the province.

The member from Prince Albert Northcote got up today and talked about the impact of rapid access counselling in her community. We know that supports for our youth, Mr. Speaker, they're not just in the school setting, Mr. Speaker. They're also in the community. We're pleased to expand rapid access counselling in a number of communities. We're going to be looking at expanding it to more communities and working with both communities and school divisions to better support our youth in the years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — To take leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have some individuals who joined us during question period. They're seated in the east gallery. As I said, the roads in Saskatchewan are not great right now. Very happy to see these folks make the treacherous drive from Saskatoon to be here. Representing steelworkers we have Malik Draz is here, as well as Umair Cheema and Khizer Abbas, again here to see the introduction of Bill No. 613. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 147 — *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 147, *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 147, *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023* 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 of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — I request leave to consider all stages of the bill immediately.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to consider all stages of Bill No. 147, *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023* immediately. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The minister may proceed to move second reading.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 147 — *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023*

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill 147, *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023*. Mr. Speaker, the current legal age to purchase tobacco and vapour products is 18 years. This means that legally purchased products are commonly available in Saskatchewan high schools, where younger peers can be exposed to the harms of these products. As a result, the smoking and vaping rates in Saskatchewan amongst our young people are far too high.

It is the opinion of the Government of Saskatchewan that tobacco and vapour products have no place in Saskatchewan schools, and that is why our government is taking action to protect our students from being exposed to these products.

Mr. Speaker, our government has already taken several important steps to curb smoking and the harmful effects of environmental tobacco smoke, including introducing legislation restricting the advertising, promotion, and use of tobacco and vapour products to young people. Our government is prepared to take further steps through *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023* to protect the health of Saskatchewan people and continue the efforts to reduce tobacco use in our province.

Specifically this bill will increase the legal age to purchase tobacco and nicotine vapour products from 18 years to 19 years and clarify existing restrictions on advertising and promotion of nicotine vapour products where youth can be exposed.

Mr. Speaker, in developing this bill our government consulted with representatives from the Saskatchewan Health Authority, non-governmental organizations, business associations, and

health professional associations. I wish to thank them and their colleagues for their dedicated work and their important contributions to this bill.

I would also like to say thanks to, seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, the Youth4Change group who, if you will recall, hosted a rally in May to advocate for stronger tobacco and vaping legislation to protect Saskatchewan kids. To this group, I'd say thank you and congratulations. Your hard work has paid off.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to building a healthier Saskatchewan. We believe these amendments will help to protect Saskatchewan residents from the harms of smoking and vaping, and they will reduce the use of tobacco, notably amongst our province's young people.

I am pleased to move second reading of amendments to Bill No. 147, *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The minister has moved second reading of Bill No. 147, *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank the minister opposite for providing an embargoed copy of the bill so we were able to have a look at it ahead of time.

And I really want to thank the Youth4Change group and everyone who's joining them here today. You know, you folks have been advocating for years for this change. I've been the Health critic since 2018 and I think that's when this conversation initially started, and specifically with Jennifer May who's been with this crew since the beginning, and working very hard to bring these changes forward in an always very respectful and professional and organized way.

So I want to thank the whole crew that's here today, the leaders and also the youth leaders who are . . . I said this a little bit earlier, but stand up amongst your peers and to stand for something. And you know, I want to congratulate you on taking that step in participating in democracy and in fighting for the health of your peers with this legislation. We have been happy to support these changes over the years and to raise the voices of the advocacy that's been happening here.

And I do want to thank the youth though, for providing a particular perspective on what it's like to be in high school today, what it's like to be going into university, you know, all of these different perspectives we've heard over the years. It's a lot different. I'm not very old, but it's a lot different than when I was in high school and when I was graduating. And you know, I know the goal here and the intent is to take vaping and smoking out of schools as much as possible and we're happy to do that. We're happy to support this legislation and to allow for it to move forward today in its next steps.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 147, *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — I designate that Bill No. 147, *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023* be committed to the Committee of the Whole on Bills and the said bill to be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills immediately.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Committee of the Whole on Bills.

Deputy Clerk: — Committee of the Whole on Bills.

The Speaker: — I do now leave the Chair of the Assembly to go into Committee of the Whole on Bills.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BILLS

Bill No. 147 — *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023*

The Chair: — The item of business before the committee is Bill No. 147, *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023*.

[Clauses 1 to 16 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 147, *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023*.

I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — I move that the committee report the bill without amendment.

The Chair: — It has been moved that the committee report Bill No. 147, *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023* without amendment. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Mr. Chair, I move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Chair: — It's been moved by the minister the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of Committees.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 147, *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023* without amendment.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health may proceed to move third reading.

[14:45]

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 147 — *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023*

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 147, *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act, 2023* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS (continued)

Bill No. 613 — *The Saskatchewan Employment (Fairer Workplaces, Better Jobs) Amendment Act, 2023*

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 613, *The Saskatchewan Employment (Fairer Workplaces, Better Jobs) Amendment Act, 2023* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member that Bill No. 613 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 member.

Ms. Sarauer: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

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 very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Police (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2023*. The 2022 Speech from the Throne announced the creation of the Saskatchewan marshals service or SMS. The SMS is a supplementary police force that will provide an additional law enforcement presence across Saskatchewan.

The SMS is not designed to replace the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. Rather it will support and supplement existing police services across the province, including the RCMP, municipal, and First Nations.

Its duties include detecting, disrupting, and deterring criminal activity, primarily in rural and remote areas; conducting proactive investigations into offences related to farming and agriculture, such as cattle, crop, metal, and farm chemical theft, and trespassing that may result in crop damage; enforcing provincial and federal statutes; locating and apprehending high-risk and prolific offenders with outstanding warrants; and providing emergency and specialized support to other law enforcement services, including the RCMP, First Nations, and municipal police services.

This August the SMS was officially established by order in council in accordance with section 24(1) of the Act. Establishing the SMS by order was an interim step to allow the staffing and procurement process to begin. This bill will designate the SMS as a police service through legislation and set out details respecting the structure, operation, and governance as well as collective bargaining and human resource matters.

Under the proposed legislative structure, a chief marshal is responsible for the administration, management, and operation of the SMS as well as maintaining discipline. The minister is responsible to provide general direction to the chief marshal and work with them to develop long-term strategic priorities.

The legislation expressly prohibits the minister from providing direction respecting investigations, the conduct of operations, the discipline of members, or the day-to-day administration of the SMS. The SMS government's advisory council will also be established to advise the minister on the minister's powers and

duties respecting the SMS.

This structure will ensure the SMS is able to carry out its duties and mandate independently without political bias. Mr. Speaker, this government is firmly committed to ensuring the safety and security of our citizens. The SMS will carry out an important role by proactively addressing criminal activity and providing supports to existing policing services.

In addition to the changes respecting to the SMS, this bill also updates the Act provisions respecting the serious incident response team, or SIRT. First the changes create a warrant process that will allow SIRT to obtain evidence from third parties to assist with investigations. Currently if SIRT requires third-party evidence and under the third party is not co-operative, a warrant is required under the Criminal Code. That warrant process requires a reasonable belief that a criminal offence has been committed. Creating specific warrants or powers for SIRT will help ensure that goals of transparency and public confidence in policing are met, even in those cases where there are no grounds to believe an offence has been committed.

Appropriate rules and processes are included with the changes to ensure privacy rights of third parties are respected. These changes also address housekeeping administrative matters respecting to notice and timing requirements. Most of these changes are currently addressed through regulations. These updates will better clarify the rules through the Act.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Police (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2023*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 144 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet and begin by entering some comments on Bill No. 144, *The Police (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2023*.

You know, when this opposition talks about a government that is out of touch, I think this bill is a prime example of that, Mr. Speaker. This is a bill that creates a new marshal service. It's very difficult to identify stakeholders that are calling for this particular thing, Mr. Speaker. We know as of now that existing police across this province — RCMP, local municipal police — they have not had good things to say about this plan. They have not had good things to say about this bill.

You know, when you think about the folks that are represented by SARM . . . We just heard at our convention just recently from the president of SARM, who expressed concerns on behalf of the folks that he represents in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Again this is an example of this government's lack of consultation, their lack of being in touch with what people out there actually need and want, and the fact that they're getting bad advice from fewer and fewer people in smaller and smaller rooms, Mr. Speaker.

And when this opposition talks about mismanagement, waste and mismanagement, this is a perfect example of that waste and mismanagement — \$20 million, Mr. Speaker. That money would go much further being invested into front-line policing in existing

bodies. We know that when you set up a whole new policing body, all the operating, the administrative cost that's going to come with that, it absolutely makes no sense.

And we know that the factors that are driving crime, like mental health and addiction, primarily are redlining. Those services aren't getting the supports they need in the communities. So why not, you know, take the plan put forward from this no-plan NDP? Take half of this 20 million, put it into mental health and addiction supports. Take the other half of this 20 million and put it into front-line policing, Mr. Speaker. You know, it just defies common sense, this bill, Mr. Speaker.

We certainly will be speaking to many of the concerns we have right off the hop. The lack of oversight for this policing body . . . We know that whenever you have a policing body, it's very important to have an independent oversight of police. And we still haven't seen a clear plan from this government where that's concerned. And in a province with a legacy like something like Neil Stonechild, you'd think this would be front and centre in their minds as they're moving forward with a new policing body, Mr. Speaker.

The lack of independence from the minister. We heard from the minister right there that the chief of this marshals service is going to report directly to him. You know, police should be independent from elected politicians, Mr. Speaker. The fact that I have to stand up and say this is shocking in 2023, Mr. Speaker, with all that we've seen around the world.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're very concerned. We're very concerned not only about what this government is doing or not doing when it comes to the factors that are driving crime — you know, this is a real concern for people out there — but we know what those factors are. We know that mental health and addiction, we know that a lack of opportunity, a lack of hope, we know the legacy of colonialism for example, we know that there are many things that are driving crime in this province, Mr. Speaker. And we don't see sufficient action from this government when it comes to that, Mr. Speaker. So we're very concerned on this side.

I know that my colleague, the House Leader, the critic for Justice is going above and beyond doing the consultation that is required, the consultation that should have been done by this government before they introduced a bill like this. And I'm looking forward to hearing from her as well as my colleagues on this bill. So with that I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 144, *The Police (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2023*.

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. 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 rise today to move second reading of *The Funeral and Cremation Services (Legal*

Decision-Maker Protection) Amendment Act, 2023. When a family member, Mr. Speaker, passes away of course it can be a very difficult time for families to make decisions respecting the final resting place of loved ones. In some cases families will disagree on how the remains should be disposed of, what the deceased would have wanted. Dealing with human remains in a timely manner is of course of significant concern, and disputes between interested parties should not contribute to lengthy delays and a lack of dignity for the remains.

Mr. Speaker, the existing funeral and cremation services Act has a priority scheme in place which sets out the order of persons who may make decisions with respect to human remains. The scheme is meant to promote timely decision making and timely disposition of the human remains, Mr. Speaker. However where persons in the same category of decision making disagree, the Act defaults to the decision making of the oldest in the category, and this is a default scheme that is archaic. It's no longer appropriate, particularly in cases where one parent may be the legal decision maker pursuant to a court order.

The proposed amendments create a distinction between the legal decision maker for a child and another parent, ensuring that in the unfortunate situation where a parent outlives a child, and the parents cannot agree on disposition, the person with legal decision-making authority will have priority over another parent.

The proposed amendments also include housekeeping changes to implement modern drafting processes. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Funeral and Cremation Services (Legal Decision-Maker Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 145 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to be on my feet to provide initial comments on Bill No. 145, *The Funeral and Cremation Services (Legal Decision-Maker Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*. I listened to the comments of the minister with interest. And I think, you know, I know that my colleagues and the critic in this area will want to take a closer look at this bill. But I understand that the changes here, at least some of them, are definitely welcome in terms of the change to this very antiquated law that gave the oldest parent decision making when it came to plans around disposition of human remains, around funerals, Mr. Speaker.

And I understand that this was actually an issue that was brought to the government's attention by Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. My colleagues — the member from Douglas Park, the member from Regina University — were contacted by a mother actually that had been excluded from decision making when it came to making arrangements for her son, after she lost her son. And I understand that this was a very disturbing and troubling incident.

She was basically . . . Although she was the primary caregiver for the son, and there was a divorce and perhaps even abuse involved with the ex, Mr. Speaker, she was completely excluded from making arrangements for her son, excluded from that grieving process. And she reached out to the opposition and we brought her concerns forward. And I should correct myself. We

didn't bring them forward; the member for Douglas Park and the member for Regina University brought those concerns forward.

[15:00]

So it is heartening to see the government move quickly on this, and it is an example of, you know, some of the good work that's being done by this opposition, Mr. Speaker. So I just want to, you know, mention that good work that was done by my colleagues, and I know that they'll have more to say about this. Certainly reading the provision of the Act, it's completely shocking that this fell just to the eldest of the two parents.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, that there is I understand another substantive change in this bill that I'm just seeing obviously for the first time. And we'll take a closer look at that and provide some more fulsome comments on the record in due course.

But you know, all to say this was something my colleagues advocated for. We're glad to see the government was willing to work with us on this and to bring this change forward. The loss of a loved one obviously is a terrible time, and it's our duty as legislators to do everything we can to make that time a little less painful, Mr. Speaker.

So with that I look forward to hearing from my colleagues on this bill, and I'll move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 145, the funeral and cremation services amendment Act, 2023.

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. 146 — *The King's Bench
Consequential Amendments Act, 2023***

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The King's Bench Consequential Amendments Act, 2023*. This is a companion bill to *The King's Bench Act* that was passed last session as a result of the succession of the Throne. This bill makes housekeeping amendments to over 250 statutes to replace references to the Queen with references to the King.

In particular references to the Court of Queen's Bench will be replaced with references to the Court of King's Bench, references to *The Queen's Bench Rules* replaced with references to *The King's Bench Rules*. Oaths will be updated to reflect the current monarch, and sections references to *The King's Bench Act* will be updated.

This bill is entirely housekeeping in nature. It makes no substantive changes to the legislation that is impacted, Mr. Speaker. And I am pleased to move second reading of *The King's Bench Consequential Amendments Act, 2023*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 146 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I

recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet to offer initial comments on Bill No. 146, *The King's Bench Consequential Amendments Act, 2023*.

The Minister for Justice has outlined this is purely a housekeeping bill. There's no substantive changes under this Act, Mr. Speaker. I'm hoping that each and every time I get up to speak to one of these bills, it will increase the likelihood that I finally start referring to the court as the Court of King's Bench and not the Court of Queen's Bench. It's been a very difficult change for all of us to change our vocabulary as it were.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have nothing more to say on this bill and I move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 146, *The King's Bench Consequential Amendments Act, 2023*.

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.

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 Meewasin.

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and be on my feet today to speak to Bill 138, *The Workers' Compensation (Extending Firefighter Coverage) Amendment Act, 2023*.

And as the title suggests, this bill is looking at extending health coverage through the Workers' Compensation to firefighters, also including paramedics in that. So you know, first, I just want to start by thanking all the front-line heroes we have serving in our province, the firefighters and paramedics, for all the work that they do day in and day out. Showing up for some of the most challenging situations — some of us couldn't even imagine — meeting crisis upon crisis. Spending long hours away from their families, working nights, weekends, missing those family events to serve the public, to serve each and every one of us when unfortunately those crises do arise.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank them for continuing to pull the weight in Saskatchewan under a strained emergency ambulance system. You know, many times our firefighters are sometimes the first on site when we dial 911, and they are heading into a crisis and meeting it head-on.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank them for pulling the weight as

well in a province that is struggling under the weight of a mental health and addictions crisis. Again a lot of times when these situations happen and 911 is dialed, we have our firefighters and paramedics heading to these situations. A lot of times firefighters are hitting there first and they're doing everything they can to save a life, to manage those crises.

You know, we've said in this House before that when we are running away from a crisis, firefighters and paramedics are the people we see running towards a crisis, towards dangerous situations. And in those dangerous situations, we're seeing our firefighters and paramedics being exposed to all kinds of health-harming situations.

So I want to take a moment as well to recognize the work of the Saskatchewan Professional Firefighters and Paramedics Association on the work that they do advocating for their members. Mr. Speaker, we, as an opposition, and the government have met on numerous occasions with this organization, an amazing organization of people who have the best interests of their members at heart. And so I really want to thank them and recognize the fantastic advocacy work they have done on having — what I'll talk about later — some of the amendments we're seeing to this bill brought forward.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there's times when you meet with groups as a member of the legislature. They come to the legislature and you meet with them and you hear proposals from people, and a lot of times those proposals just make so much sense. Common-sense solutions are brought forward. And you know, we've seen these proposals brought forward by the Saskatchewan Professional Firefighters and Paramedics Association to include more cancer types in Workers' Compensation. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? What we're really seeing is suggestions and proposals brought forward that could make such a difference in the lives of their members and all the people that they advocate for.

And so you know, when you see these kind of proposals, regardless of political stripe, we meet in the middle and we look to implement them. You know, and we saw this recently with a lot of the advocacy done by the folks, the youth from Youth4Change and their adult chaperones. You know, hearing them advocate on raising the age of vaping and tobacco products to be in line with liquor and cannabis regulations, you know, is something that we as an official opposition and as the critic for Liquor and Gaming and cannabis really welcome. And we're so happy to see legislation like that brought forward.

And in regards to the advocacy done by the Saskatchewan Professional Firefighters and Paramedics Association who, as I've mentioned, represent these front-line heroes, they've been calling on the government, they've met with the opposition, to include six more types of cancer in the occupational diseases that firefighters face. And when you hear these calls, you just say, this makes so much sense.

You know, as I was thinking about addressing and thinking about thanking firefighters and paramedics for the work that they do, it really just hit me that, you know, as a society we ask these individuals, these front-line heroes, we ask them to run into these difficult situations many times to save our loved ones. And when you start thinking about that, each and every single one of these

firefighters and paramedics, they also have loved ones in their lives. And so when they have crisis in their lives, I think it's time for us to be on their side. And so I am proud to see the work that this Chamber has done on bringing these issues to the front.

So, Mr. Speaker, I won't be on my feet long, but I will just go over some of the things that are in this bill and some of the thoughts that we have to add to this conversation. What we're seeing in Bill 138 is the addition of six new cancers — penile, pancreatic, thyroid, laryngeal, mesothelioma, and soft-tissue sarcoma — to the list of occupational diseases for firefighters. This is something we can be hugely, hugely proud of in Saskatchewan, as this is the broadest list of covered cancers in the country. That's something to be proud of.

Further what we're seeing in this legislation — we have a couple more items — we're seeing the removal of mandatory coverage for Workers' Compensation Board for executive officers, but we're seeing the addition of students in recognized programs. Additionally we're seeing that dollars awarded for permanent functional impairment will increase over five years to a minimum of 4,000 to a maximum of 82,000. You know, trying independence allowance on CPI [Consumer Price Index].

Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely supportive of the move to expand these presumptive cancer coverages. This is a positive step. This is something that this association has advocated for and has been brought forward, and I am so happy to amplify that voice. You know, at the end of the day, we really wish that this coverage wasn't needed, but our front-line heroes deserve, when a crisis happens in their family, that we are all here for them.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think that there are a few areas where we could probably continue looking, and there's a few areas where we could continue to advance in these areas. You know, we're seeing a lot of discussion around other front-line workers, front-line workers in shift work. We're seeing a conversation right now between the link in shift work to breast cancer. And so in particular we're seeing nurses, also front-line heroes who are responding usually to situations that firefighters and paramedics are going into, we're seeing this breast cancer just rise in those areas. So certainly areas where we can continue to see movement.

Additionally we're also thinking about wildfire firefighters. You know, are there coverage exemptions that would apply to them? Are they going to be included? Are we going to see that advance? And we have some questions about the changes around this bill to the removal of executive officers from Workers' Compensation Board. You know, how does this line up with other provinces? I know the minister mentioned that a number of other provinces have removed executive officers. Those executive officers would seek a private type insurance, Mr. Speaker. We just want to ensure that this is going to be the best for all folks working in the province of Saskatchewan.

And so I know that my colleague the critic for Labour will continue to engage with stakeholders on this bill, and we will continue to engage. And I know that a lot of my colleagues will have more to say. And so at this time, I move to adjourn debate on Bill 138.

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 Saskatoon Fairview.

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to be on my feet today to enter into debate on Bill No. 140, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act*.

I understand that the intent of this bill is to repeal several different laws that exist in the province that are no longer relevant. So there's a list here that the minister has also provided. I think there's about eight of them that are being repealed here, and some of them, you know, going back to 1920 and 1928. So it's certainly something to see how bills are made in this whole process.

So yeah, you know, we'll certainly see if there's any repercussions to these bills being changed, Mr. Speaker. But of course we know that as times change, we need to make sure that our legislation is accurate. We'll be looking through this with a fine-tooth comb, but with that I would move to adjourn debate on this bill for today.

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 Saskatoon Fairview.

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate again, this time on Bill No. 141, *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023*. We're getting through the most exciting bills as we start off the session here, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

There are a number of housekeeping changes in these Acts. In here we have some spelling and grammatical errors or cross-referencing mistakes. And I do want to thank the drafters and all the folks that work on legislation because I know this must be such a tedious task. Even reading through the legislation, looking at all the cross-references is overwhelming sometimes, Mr. Speaker.

Some of the other changes here are replacing references to Her Majesty the Queen with the Crown to become more gender-neutral. And of course as a result of this, these changes and changing "his" or "her" to "theirs," it means that we won't have to make these changes again, you know, if we go back to having a Queen again, Mr. Speaker.

And I was quite interested in what this process was going to look like after hearing about the passing of Her Majesty, in seeing all of the references made to the Queen in all of the legislation and across this building. It's so entrenched in what we do after, you know, she had been reigning for 70 years. And so it's strange for me, at the ripe old age of nearly 38, to think about having a new sovereign, but I know it's probably quite something for members who have been on this planet a little bit longer as well.

And I was very interested to see what was going to happen. So I'm encouraged to see that there are many different statutes that are being dealt with at once. I was a little concerned that we were going to have to do these sort of one at a time.

So I know we'll be making sure to take a close look at all of these materials, Mr. Speaker, but with that I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 141 for today.

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 Walsh Acres.

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate today to speak to Bill No. 142, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Utility Line Locates) Amendment Act*. This is a piece of legislation that seeks to improve the safety around private citizens and folks working at our Crown corporations who are going to be digging around utility lines, providing some extra time to get those lines marked.

From a safety perspective, Mr. Speaker, this bill makes a lot of sense. Having people be injured or die because of coming in contact with utility lines, underground utility lines, is a completely preventable situation, and so giving Crowns a little bit more time to make sure that that work is done is a beneficial thing. And it is good to see the consistency across the three different Crowns — SaskTel, SaskPower, and SaskEnergy.

You know, I've used this service myself, Mr. Speaker, to have lines in my own yard checked before and marked before we do any work, and always found the employees from any of the Crowns coming out to do this amazing to work with, professional, and got the job done real quick.

I would make a suggestion that we need to make sure that there is a robust communication plan for communicating this change with the people of the province, as people want to get to work on some jobs. And making sure that they know it's going to take three working days will prevent any hardships between employees and citizens.

Just again before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, I want to express our support for our Crowns in this province. They provide invaluable service in every corner of this province, and we are very proud of the work that they do and very proud of the work that those Crown workers provide to the good people of Saskatchewan.

So 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: — Carried.

Bill No. 143

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cockrill that **Bill No. 143** — *The Child Care Amendment Act, 2023/Loi modificative de 2023 sur les garderies d'enfants* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A pleasure to enter debate today on Bill No. 143, *The Child Care Amendment Act*, a critical service here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — not just a service, but a very important economic policy as well.

The amendment Act before us, you know, really focuses on a number of points, like you know, letting centres operate multiple facilities. But this doesn't really address the core issue that is challenging this vital sector in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. There are not enough workers. Workers are not compensated at a level that befits the critical work that they do here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And we know by and large child care workers in Saskatchewan are women and they're women of colour and they do vital work and should be compensated accordingly. You know, Mr. Speaker, we have a number of working parents on this side of the Assembly with young children who are lucky to have access to child care in Saskatchewan, which is not the case for far too many people, Mr. Speaker.

We want child care in this province. We want child care that works, Mr. Speaker, but this isn't a government that's actually consulting with people impacted by their decisions. We've seen this a number of times in this Assembly. They're not consulting with centre owners to hear what they actually need, certainly not consulting with parents.

And we saw this when they delivered this \$10-a-day daycare

which they, you know, trumpeted about — which is great, this subsidy, Mr. Speaker — but their current plan and their current delivery is essentially half-baked. We've had child care providers show up multiple times, business owners show up multiple times in this Assembly to point out that what the government is doing is not working. They're moving at a snail's pace when it comes to processing applications, Mr. Speaker.

I had constituents speak out on this in the last month, Mr. Speaker, who operate a home-based daycare, who are facing the challenge of trying to move to a subsidized facility, Mr. Speaker. And the message that they got from the Ministry of Education was, sorry, we are so understaffed we cannot complete the applications that have come in; we're just working through those received prior to July — which is a remarkable lag time in terms of service delivery and what people expect from their province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that regulation ensuring those facilities are up to par is of course critical. But we have a lack of child care spaces, a lack of workers, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that has only created 373 of their targeted 6,000 new spaces for year one. I'm not going to try and do the math on my feet, Mr. Speaker — I wasn't that organized — but 373 spaces out of 6,000 is a failing grade.

Mr. Speaker, my constituent who I spoke about, Antonietta Harris, she said, "I need a timeline so I can plan my business." She spoke out in this Assembly about the challenges that she is having and she is just one voice of many. Nichole Kessel has been to this legislature two times now and her child care centre is now closed. Mr. Speaker, members of course will remember her as the director of Wiggles and Giggles in Whitewood. And again we heard from Megan Schmidt, the director at the First Years Learning Center. People keep coming to this government and telling them that what they're doing is not working.

And this as I said, is vital. People in Saskatchewan with young families by and large need child care in order to be able to work, to afford a life for their family, to advance their career. Whatever it is, Mr. Speaker, child care is essential. It's not optional. Unfortunately you know, the days of being able to exist on a single income, Mr. Speaker, afford a mortgage, you know, afford a better life than your parents had, that is not the reality that we are living with, Mr. Speaker. And a focus on child care, on addressing the failings that this government has been told about time and time and time again by parents, by workers, by leaders in the sector, is not only the bare minimum, but it's also essential for the economic growth of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I know other members will be adding their voice to this, but God, we've got to get this right. Even thinking very, very selfishly, I've had my son on a list for a child care spot since he was like a, I don't know, a seven-week-old fetus, and here we wait, Mr. Speaker, and he's eight months old. With my daughter it was much the same timeline, and we didn't find a space until she was 18 months old.

There is a small and bubbling crisis happening. There's people actually leaving the province. I can think of a girlfriend of mine who's moving to Alberta because she's better able to access child care supports there. This is a real shame. It's something that we should focus in and get fixed.

And I know the critic will be bringing some real oversight and attention to this, because as I said, this is a piece of legislation, this is an important critical service and economic driver in our province that we need to get right. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 143, *The Child Care Amendment Act, 2023*.

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.

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 Government 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 10 a.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:26.]

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