



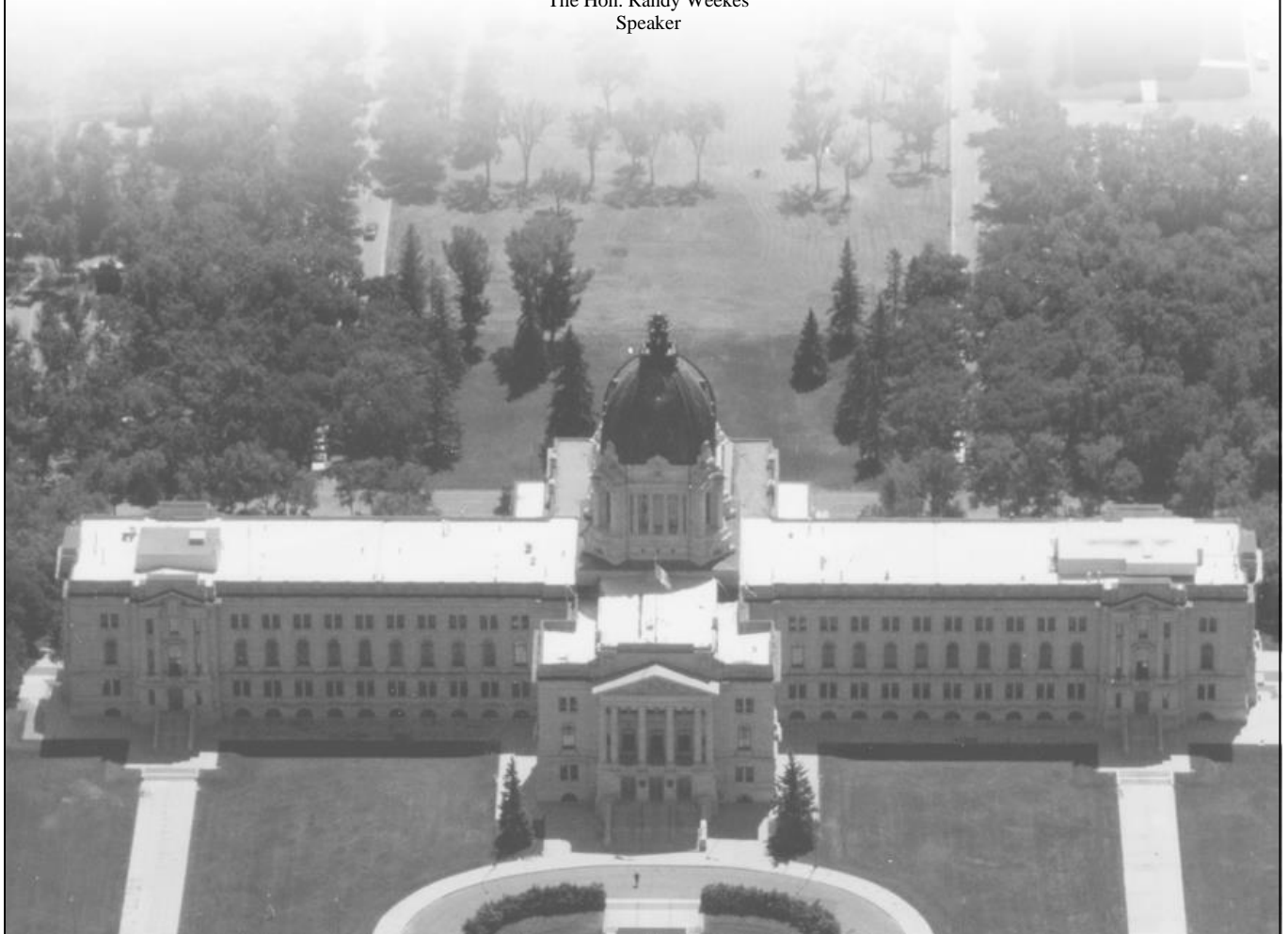
FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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) |
| Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP) | Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP) |
| Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP) | McLeod, Blaine — Lumsden-Morse (SP) |
| Burki, Noor — Regina Coronation Park (NDP) | McLeod, Hon. Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP) |
| Carr, Hon. Lori — Estevan (SP) | McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP) |
| Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP) | Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP) |
| Clarke, Jared — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP) | Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP) |
| Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP) | Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP) |
| Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP) | Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP) |
| Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP) | Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP) |
| 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

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

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

The Speaker: — I would just like to welcome all our guests. It's great to have so many people not only from school groups and citizens, but also I'd take this opportunity to welcome the delegates from PNWER [Pacific North West Economic Region]. You'll be formally introduced later. So welcome, everyone.

I'll just give you a bit of a heads-up. You're not allowed to take part in any of the proceedings. That includes clapping or talking or taking photos or videos. So please enjoy your stay. Thank you very much.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Mr. Francis: — I request leave for an extended introduction, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The request for extended introduction. Agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Mr. Francis: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce a very large contingent of colleagues from the Pacific North West Economic Region, far too numerous to mention individually, so forgive me for that. But I'd like to highlight a few that I've gotten to know quite well as I sit on the executive and have attended many meetings and conferences such as the one we're hosting in Regina this week.

First we have Matt Morrison, executive director. Please give a wave. His team: Brandon Hardenbrook, Rachael Kopp, Tara Edens, Brigitte Burwell, Nate Weigel, and Steve Myers. I don't think I missed anybody. Hi, guys. They've done so much work in preparing for this week, as have the team at Trade and Export Development. Scott Hunter is here, Carley Hannan, Moises Ferreira. Thanks, guys, for all your support in putting this conference on.

Mr. Speaker, we also have from the executive, Rick Glumac, current president of PNWER. He's the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Port Moody-Coquitlam in BC [British Columbia].

And we have some other good neighbours to the west, some of them sitting behind the bar here. We have UCP [United Conservative Party] MLA Shane Getson, Garth Rowswell, Chantelle de Jonge, Justin Wright. And supporting them this week is David Kettles from the Ministry of Trade in Alberta.

We also have some folks from the great state of Alaska. I think we have Kevin McCabe.

Several folks from Montana: the husband-and-wife team of State

Representatives Steven Galloway and his wife, Lola Sheldon-Galloway; Mark Blasdel, economic development director from the Governor's office in Montana; and Senator Mark Noland.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, last but not least, no stranger to the Saskatchewan legislature — and if you've ever met him once, you'll never forget him — retired senator John Brenden. And his extremely patient and lovely wife is accompanying him on this trip, but she can only take so much of John as well, so she opted out of today's proceedings. But these folks live just a couple hours south of Regina here, in Scobey. Strong ties and affection for this province, Mr. Speaker.

It is great to see all our guests. I'll have more to say about PNWER and this delegation in an upcoming member's statement, but for now I would ask that all members join me in welcoming this group of PNWER delegates to Regina and our provincial legislature. Thank you.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members in this Assembly, I'd like to join with the member opposite in just adding on to that wonderful introduction that he just did and extend a warm welcome on behalf of the official opposition to everyone here for this wonderful visit that we're able to host from you good folks at PNWER. I'd like to join with the member from Kindersley who I know is quite passionate about the work that he's undertaken in working with this organization. Mr. Morrison, folks from TED [Trade and Export Development], thank you so much for all the work that you've done to facilitate this.

And to every delegate here, thank you so much for coming to Saskatchewan. As a local Regina MLA, welcome to the city. Thank you for spending your time here, spending your money in the local economy, hopefully having a wonderful visit with some seasonably decent weather I should say. And I really just want to extend on behalf of the official opposition our thanks for coming here, learning about Saskatchewan, and enjoying yourselves so thoroughly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Lemaigre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Athabasca constituency, every year a good percentage of the people from Athabasca take up a pilgrimage into Lac Ste Anne. And last year was a big year for us when we attended and the Pope visited and apologized for their part in the residential school.

And I just wanted to say, while he's here, thank you to MLA Shane Getson for being part of that day and for showing his support. It means a tremendous amount to the people of Athabasca, and I just wanted to acknowledge that your contribution and your acceptance and your host was greatly appreciated. So thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we have a large contingent here from the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency in your gallery. This year was an exceptional year for wildfires, and every one of these individuals performed admirably in their duties to protect Saskatchewan's residents. While there are only a few individuals with us today, all the staff from the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency deserve a big thanks from all of us for what they do.

However we do have one special individual here with us today. Ray Unrau is the director of emergency planning and preparedness for the Saskatchewan public agency and has spent over 40 years in his career giving to others. This year Ray was awarded the Emergency Management Exemplary Service Award for Outstanding Contribution to Emergency Management. This was a well-deserved national recognition that we are all proud to see you receive, Ray. Thank you for your years of service and dedication to the people of Saskatchewan.

I would like all members to join me in congratulating Ray on this amazing award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to join with the minister opposite in welcoming this delegation from the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency here today. First of all, thank you to all of you for all that you do every single day in many different ways keeping Saskatchewan safe, in particular — as had been mentioned by the minister — with respect to the unprecedented amount of wildfires we've been seeing in Saskatchewan lately. Thank you so much for your work.

And a particular thanks goes to Ray for his many decades of service to this province, for being recognized in this way that you have. The Emergency Management Exemplary Service Award brings honour to all of us as Saskatchewan residents for the work that you've done. So thank you so much for that. Thank you all for your continued service, and once again I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's my great honour to introduce another large contingent that we have in the Assembly today, and that's 45 grade 6, 7, and 8 students from Lindale Elementary, seated behind me in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker.

The students here from Lindale School are accompanied by their teachers Ivy Sheward and Crystal Cameron. Mr. Speaker, it's always a great pleasure when we have students joining us in the Assembly. I do want to single out one — I hope I don't embarrass him — but Kane Osmar is one of the students up there, Mr. Speaker. And Kane's dad, Sean Osmar, is no stranger to this Assembly as he worked in the government caucus office for a number of years.

I look forward to meeting with this group after question period, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask all members to join me in welcoming them to this, their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I would also like to welcome Ivy Sheward and her class. Ivy was a participant in the Saskatchewan Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy in 2022 and was selected to be a member of the steering committee beginning this year. The steering committee works with my office, Social Studies Saskatchewan, and the Ministry of Education to host the SSTI [Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy] each year. SSTI will take place from April 27th to May 1st. Thank you, Ivy, for your dedication to the SSTI program. And please join me in welcoming Ms. Sheward and her students to their Legislative Assembly.

I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you, seated in the Speaker's gallery, some very special guests. In October the Regina Globe Theatre opened their 2023-24 season, and we're so grateful to have some members of the Globe Theatre joining us today. Seated in your gallery, I'd like to have all members join me in welcoming Chair of the board Lisa McIntyre — give us a wave, Lisa; artistic director Jennifer Brewin — I can hardly see them behind the clock there; and executive director Jaime Boldt. These are some extraordinary women whose passion for arts in our communities shines through in the work they do every day.

Founded in 1966, the Globe Theatre was Saskatchewan's first professional theatre company and continues to be a highlight of our city and our province for residents. The Globe Theatre is currently undergoing a major renovation project in the Prince Edward Building in downtown Regina. I was lucky enough to attend a recent Globe Theatre show called *Blind Date*. The show was so well done. It was wonderful to see so many people out enjoying the evening.

Theatre not only provides entertainment but enriches our quality of life, allows our audience to connect with a diverse array of stories and characters. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Please, for everyone, please enjoy what the Globe Theatre has to offer. Thank you so much.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members, I'd like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming — she's right — these truly astonishing women to this legislature. It's such a treat to see you here. I thought you were just maybe here for a professional excursion, just an outing, just to pop in and see what the House of democracy is doing. But a real pleasure to see you up in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, as was said, Lisa, Jennifer, and Jaime just do such extraordinary work navigating just a real wild storm of the past few years, between operating the theatre throughout the pandemic, trying to figure out what that looked like; a massive renovation project that's really going to reshape Regina's downtown. And everything that accompanies that from working with stakeholders to . . . We all know the changing cost of things in this environment, and what you do as such an important cultural institution trying to navigate all of that, keep it all together, and still put on just world-class experiences and

performances, not just for audiences who call Regina home but for people across the province and across the country and the world, to come and enjoy just an outstanding level of culture here in Regina.

I want to join with the minister in thanking you for the work that you do, not just as professionals but as real leaders here in the community who make this place a richer, better, and just all around more stupendous place to live. So I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming these three leaders to their Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present the petition.

[10:15]

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

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 drive down the rising cost of living faced by all Canadians from coast to coast.

This petition has been signed by Regina and Saskatoon. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, I rise once again today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan calling for improved mental health services for northern and rural Saskatchewan.

These citizens wish to bring to our attention that the rate of suicide among Indigenous people is three times higher than that of non-Indigenous people; that suicide rates of Indigenous people living on-reserve are twice as high as those living off-reserve, and that the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization, displacement; and intergenerational trauma are related to the high rates of suicide among Indigenous people.

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 address and work with vulnerable communities in the North and rural areas and to provide adequate mental health funding and services for northern and rural Indigenous communities.

This is signed today by individuals from Saskatoon and Warman, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly calling for the funding of in vitro fertilization treatments here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: one in six people in Canada will experience a struggle with infertility, and IVF [in vitro fertilization] treatments, as all members know, can be prohibitively expensive with one cycle costing upwards of \$10,000. That's before travel. That's before drugs. That's before any of those other additional costs that make this financial burden so real. And that says nothing about the emotional struggle that too many people are going through.

Despite public health care being a right, there is no government financial support in Saskatchewan for those requiring fertility treatments, despite the fact that other provinces in Canada have undertaken to cover this.

Saskatchewan people's ability to conceive should not depend on their socio-economic status, Mr. Speaker. And it makes sense — it makes emotional sense, moral sense, and economic sense — to invest in people here in Saskatchewan who want to grow their families here in Saskatchewan, add to our population numbers.

I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

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

The signatories of this petition today reside in White City and Lumsden. I do so present.

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 our attention the following: that inflation is the highest it's been in more than three decades; that half of Saskatchewan residents were living paycheque to paycheque before transportation and food costs skyrocketed in 2022; and that the Sask Party government's 32 new taxes and fee hikes make life more expensive, all while harming struggling industries like tourism, culture, and fitness.

Mr. Speaker, in Regina Walsh Acres I've heard it door after door

after door that this is the number one issue for citizens in my constituency. We've heard it across this province on door after door that this is the number one issue for Saskatchewan people, and the government is not doing enough to help people of this province address the affordability crisis.

I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

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

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

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've signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: that even after the October 1st increase, Saskatchewan's minimum wage remains the lowest in Canada at \$14 an hour. In addition the official opposition has been calling for paid sick leave for several years now. We're asking for 10 paid sick days each year and 14 days during a public health crisis. Paid sick leave has been proven to save employers money while making workplaces healthier and safer for all the workers.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, 71 per cent of workers in Canada have experienced workplace violence and/or harassment — truly horrific, Mr. Speaker. In 2023 the Canadian Bar Association at their AGM [annual general meeting] adopted a resolution discouraging the use of nondisclosure agreements to silence whistle-blowers and victims of abuse, discrimination, and harassment in the workplace. And much more needs to be done to ensure that workplaces in Saskatchewan are safe and harassment-free.

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

The individuals signing this petition today come from Spiritwood, Melfort, and Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Honouring the Legacy of Louis Riel

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we gather on this Louis Riel Day, we honour the profound impact and lasting legacy of the great revolutionary Louis Riel, a visionary leader whose tireless dedication shaped the very essence of Saskatchewan. Riel's unwavering commitment to justice and advocacy for Métis rights not only transformed history but also carved a path towards inclusivity and recognition of diverse cultures within our province.

Today as we commemorate his legacy, we recognize the pivotal role Louis Riel played in the formation of both Manitoba and Saskatchewan. His leadership, despite adversities, inspires us to embrace diversity and strive for equity and fairness in our communities.

En cette Journée Louis Riel, c'est l'occasion de réfléchir à l'impact profond d'un chef visionnaire dont l'influence résonne à travers l'histoire de la Saskatchewan. Louis Riel, défenseur inflexible de la justice et des droits du peuple métis, a joué un rôle essentiel dans la définition de l'identité de notre province.

Aujourd'hui en commémorant son héritage, nous reconnaissons le rôle crucial de Louis Riel dans la formation du Manitoba et de la Saskatchewan. Son leadership malgré les adversités nous inspire à embrasser la diversité et à œuvrer pour l'équité et la justice dans nos communautés. Sa vision pour une société plus juste continue de résonner. Merci.

[Translation: On this Louis Riel Day, we have the opportunity to reflect upon the profound impact of a visionary leader whose influence echoes throughout the history of Saskatchewan. Louis Riel, unyielding defender of justice and the rights of the Métis people, played an essential role in establishing the identity of our province.

Today in commemorating his legacy, we recognize the pivotal role of Louis Riel in the formation of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. His leadership, despite adversities, inspires us to embrace diversity and to strive for equity and fairness in our communities. His vision of a more just society continues to resonate. Thank you.]

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

Saskatchewan United Party Offers Conservative Option

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to say my party, the Sask United Party, is working hard for the Saskatchewan people, giving them a conservative option for this province. We are actively changing politics in this province with town hall meetings, door-to-door campaigns, and giving the people a voice in this Assembly. We have successfully brought about action on parental rights and are moving the needle on taxation, net zero, health care, and crime.

In my conversations with former colleagues on that side of the Assembly, it's clear that some of them want change too. Mr. Speaker, I would say to them, you are welcome to join me on this side of the Assembly to be with a party that is about change, to be with a party that is about action, that is fighting for the

Saskatchewan people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Government's Record on Economic Growth

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last week when StatsCan released its 2022 GDP [gross domestic product] number, this government was able to point to a single solid year of economic growth for the first time in five years. Yet as usual they were afraid to place the number in the context of their five-year record. So let's do so, shall we?

Over the last five years, real GDP has only grown by 1.82 per cent or, on average, 0.36 per cent per year; this government has the second-lowest rate of GDP growth in Canada; and the economy has contracted in three of the last five years.

But, Mr. Speaker, the record gets even worse when you look at the details. Over the last five years, the record of this Premier is that six critical sectors of our economy have actually shrunk: mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction down 4.08 per cent; construction down 19.73 per cent; transportation and warehousing down 9.57 per cent; management of companies and enterprises down a whopping 76.28 per cent; accommodation and food services down 12.94 per cent; administration support, waste management, remediation down 10.84 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

If you don't believe me, check with Statistics Canada. Because, boy oh boy, Mr. Speaker, is that a contraction that works for anyone?

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

Public Servant Receives Emergency Management Exemplary Service Award

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to recognize Ray Unrau. Mr. Unrau is a leader in our province who has dedicated his career to making communities safer. Mr. Unrau has spent the last 40 years of his career giving others tools, resources, and supports that reduce the impact of emergencies.

His career began as an EMT [emergency medical technician]. In the '90s he joined the Saskatoon Fire Department and transferred to the Emergency Management Organization within the city. In 2017 Mr. Unrau brought his expertise to the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, where he is currently the director of emergency planning and preparedness.

Following an earthquake that left 500,000 residents homeless and caused over 25,000 deaths in Armenia in 1988, Mr. Unrau led a private rescue team in that country. He designed and integrated the city of Saskatoon's emergency operation centre, and he led Saskatchewan's first-ever provincial emergency exercise. Mr. Unrau helps communities prepare a clear path forward when they are facing the most chaotic of circumstances.

In September Mr. Unrau was awarded the Emergency Management Exemplary Service Award for Outstanding

Contribution to Emergency Management. Please join me in thanking Mr. Unrau for his commitment to emergency management and congratulating him on this very prestigious award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

New Youth Centre Will Serve Buffalo River Dene Nation

Mr. Lemaigre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was my pleasure and honour on September 5th to be at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Buffalo River Dene Nation new youth centre, along with the Premier and the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Rural Health. This youth centre will become the heart of the community, a place where people can gather to share good times with friends and family, a place where our young people can learn, grow, and thrive, a place where creativity and innovation flourish in an environment that honours tradition and culture.

Our government is investing more than 587,000 in provincial funding towards the building of this youth centre under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. Once completed, the new spacious youth centre will offer a wide variety of programs and services to the community. The teachings that will be offered here — wellness, leadership, and recreation — will guide and strengthen our youth.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Catarat acknowledged that this is the first time in the history of Buffalo River Dene Nation that a premier has visited her community. I would ask all members to join me in celebrating the groundbreaking of the youth centre and for the good work the community of Buffalo River Dene Nation is doing for the youth in the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatoon Resident Recognized for Volunteerism

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatoon has always been blessed with many amazing volunteers and community leaders, and today I'm proud to recognize the work of just one of those individuals. At the 69th B'nai Brith Lodge dinner, Bob Jeanneau, former boss for the member from Saskatoon Southeast, was recognized with the 2023 We Are Proud of You Award for his decades of volunteerism and community spirit.

Bob's journey of volunteerism began many years ago when he joined the Knights of Columbus. For the next three decades, Bob would play a pivotal role in the Lucky Horseshoe Bingo, raising funds for various community projects. One of Bob's most significant contributions in Saskatoon was his leadership in the development of the Columbian Manor, a faith-based housing complex for seniors.

[10:30]

His commitment to this project spanned many years. This would see the Manor expand not once but twice, which would result in the creation of a comprehensive senior living facility that provides comfort, care, and companionship for those who need

it. To this day, Bob continues to serve as a volunteer responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Manor. Bob is now 91 and still going strong.

Among Bob's most significant contributions, in my opinion, is his granddaughter Jade who is married to my son. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, congratulations to Bob Jeanneau on his lifetime recognition, and thank you for making Saskatchewan a better place.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Collaboration and Connection within Pacific NorthWest Economic Region

Mr. Francis: — Mr. Speaker, many of our colleagues and I have had the great privilege the last few days of attending the 2023 PNWER Economic Leadership Forum. We took part in many sessions which ranged from navigating the Canadian and US [United States] government legislative systems, with your help, to developing corridors through the Pacific Northwest and so much more.

I've had the great pleasure of being part of PNWER for several years now, and have learned so much from my experience as Canadian vice-president and Co-Chair of the agriculture working group. Our goal as part of PNWER continues to be not only to share our province's story but to understand what our shared priorities and visions are and where our goals align.

As a government we have been so grateful for this opportunity to host this forum once again, this time in our provincial capital. PNWER is one of our most valued networks, and we are fortunate to have opportunities such as this to connect and grow. They play a large role in ensuring we work together to limit barriers on trade. Without this collaboration and partnership we wouldn't have the safe, efficient, and sustainable supply chain we rely on every day.

Building global relationships is incredibly important to our government, to ensure we can advance international priorities and strengthen relationships with potential investors. Mr. Speaker, by working together we are ensuring the entire Northwest region can succeed and ensuring as always that Saskatchewan is succeeding.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Health Care Staffing and Management of Health Care System

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing when it comes to health care. At St. Paul's Hospital, which serves so many in my constituency, the long-standing problems with short-staffing and ignoring health care workers have finally reached a crisis point.

Fire code violations written up by the fire department because there are so many beds in the hallway that fire exits are blocked — this is their record. When will the Minister of Health take

responsibility for this government's mismanagement of health care and apologize to Saskatchewan patients and health care workers for letting things get so bad at our major hospitals?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And first of all, I want to indicate that we are very grateful for the excellent work that is being provided by our health care workers at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon and right across this province, Mr. Speaker. And we acknowledge that there are some capacity pressures right now that's impacting patient care, and we want to ensure that we are taking the appropriate steps to be able to address that, Mr. Speaker.

As was indicated by the Premier earlier this week, the Ministry of Health and the Government of Saskatchewan provides over \$4 billion to the SHA, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, which is responsible for administering health care in a vast number of communities across this province.

Mr. Speaker, what you saw earlier this week was the SHA do a media availability and not only talk about some of the previous investments that have been made into St. Paul's Hospital but all hospitals in Saskatoon to address capacity issues, but also some immediate steps are going to be taken that are under way right now, in addition to what's already been done already, plus 90-day and longer term solutions as well to address the issues we are facing in Saskatoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, this isn't a blip. This has been going on for months. And it shouldn't have . . . The minister should not have to be shamed through an open letter from over 100 health care workers before he takes action.

All they needed to do, Mr. Speaker, was listen to health care workers who have been calling for solutions for years. Fix the short-staffing, stop treating patients in hallways, and actually listen to health care workers. The minister's plan won't fix any of these problems, and health care workers have no faith that this government will actually follow through on the commitments it made this weekend.

Why won't the minister listen to health care workers and implement the solutions that they're calling for at St. Paul's Hospital?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And this government takes very seriously the feedback and the information that we receive from front-line health care providers. We do it on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker, in meeting with them and, when we have the opportunity, to tour facilities, to take phone calls and emails from health care workers.

Mr. Speaker, I'm informed that the SHA senior leadership regularly visits these facilities, including this past weekend when senior VPs [vice-president] from the SHA and the CEO [chief executive officer] himself visited St. Paul's Hospital to see first-

hand and talk to health care workers, Mr. Speaker.

And when it comes to the work that is going to be done by the SHA, as I said in my previous answer, there has been work that has been done, Mr. Speaker: adding 84 more beds into the city of Saskatoon, providing more fully staffed ambulances into Saskatoon, adding additional emergency personnel into St. Paul's Hospital. That has been previously done, Mr. Speaker. And what was announced this week was more immediate steps are going to be taken to help increase capacity and improve patient flow at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon so that people can get the health care that they need when they need it, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — The minister's response does not line up with what we're hearing from health care workers, Mr. Speaker.

Let's review concerns that were raised in the letter from health care workers. They're running at 100 per cent over capacity 100 per cent of the time for months. Patients being treated on hallway stretchers with almost no privacy. Staff burning out and taking stress leave, making short-staffing worse. This is the state of the health care system under this tired and out-of-touch government. They've lurched from crisis to crisis, and things aren't getting any better after 16 years. They're getting worse.

How is this building and protecting Saskatchewan? And how is this growth that works for everyone?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of the other immediate actions that were announced this week by the SHA include enhancing weekend staffing in the Saskatoon hospitals to ensure that patient care transitions are happening, Mr. Speaker; focusing on the over-capacity protocols; and also adding temporary emergency department staffing as well — more social workers, more support workers, security personnel as well — to make sure that we are enhancing that care, Mr. Speaker.

What we don't see from the members opposite — and there has been significant, significant investments by this government into health care, into things like the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon, new urgent care centres, Mr. Speaker, investments into paramedicine and to paramedics and EMS [emergency medical services] in Saskatoon — and what we don't see from the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, is what they would do to invest into health care to address some of these challenges and to build for the future, Mr. Speaker.

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

Emergency Hotel Stays Paid by Social Services

Ms. Conway: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Here's a situation that, you know, if we handled it right we might have some extra dollars going towards health care in this province. I'm speaking about the Sask Party's mismanagement of public funds on a nightly rate of \$200 at the Sunrise Motel, a hotel owned by a Sask

Party government member, the member for Regina Northeast. The hotel rates jumped over 50 per cent once staff learned that Social Services would be footing the bill — \$200 at the Sunrise Motel, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I took the liberty of cruising Booking.com last night and invite the viewing public to do the same. You know how many hotels you can book in Regina for under \$200? All but two, the Marriott and the Sask Hotel.

So yesterday I asked the minister to table money paid out to the Sunrise Motel every year for the last five years; the nightly rates charged; all ministry policies around hotel usage, use of hotels, and payment of hotels. Does the minister have that information today?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, of course my first priority, our government's first priority in emergency situations is looking after vulnerable clients and finding them a warm and safe place to stay. Using motels as shelters is a last resort. I would note this has been happening for many years, including under the previous NDP government. There's fluctuations in pricing in hotels based on different circumstances day to day, month to month, etc.

But bottom line, Mr. Speaker, there's no conspiracy here. No matter how desperate the opposition is, we'll continue to cover the costs of these emergency situations, and we'll continue to do so in a responsible manner, Mr. Speaker.

But I would ask the member opposite, what price do members opposite put on vulnerable clients? What are they worth to the NDP?

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

Ms. Conway: — We're asking for transparency, Mr. Speaker, and those are the same lines from yesterday. How embarrassing. These are basic questions to serious questions, Mr. Speaker. The Ministry of Health worked through the long weekend to come up with a solution to St. Paul's Hospital. The idea that this minister, with the full backing of the civil service behind him, can't provide a single answer to any one of these questions is embarrassing, Mr. Speaker.

In scrums yesterday, the minister said the ministry pays \$150,000 a year for hotels. But that's just for hotels through income assistance, isn't it, Mr. Speaker? This hotel was paid for through child protection. When are we going to get the amount paid for hotels through child protection?

The minister keeps saying hotel usage is going down. Prove it. Stop quoting incomplete numbers. Stop referring to data you haven't provided. Will the minister table expenditures on hotels through both income assistance and child protection . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, yeah, we will endeavour to get that information in a reasonable amount of time. Officials

are working on that, Mr. Speaker. But again our first priority is our vulnerable clients out there, Mr. Speaker. We work to try and find those folks a shelter if they are available; if not, try and find friends and family.

Case workers work on an individual basis to try and find appropriate accommodations. They look for the best rate available for that night where there are vacancies, Mr. Speaker. And so there are fluctuations, as we all know, in hotel prices across the province and around the world, for example.

But, Mr. Speaker, again there's no conspiracy in this case. As I mentioned yesterday, the member in question, it's my understanding, does not work or manage that facility. And so the question for the member opposite: what are these clients . . .

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, he's the minister and this is question period. He'll provide the answers today, thank you very much. "We'll endeavour to find it." "We'll look into it." "We'll try." When are those numbers going to be forthcoming, Mr. Speaker?

Our priority is vulnerable people. How did Evelyn Harper find herself homeless to begin with? That government evicted her, Mr. Speaker.

Another question for the minister: will he table the missing requisitions? And is it true what the hotel told me and Evelyn, is that the 200 nightly rate continued for the rest of her stay? We don't have those requisitions. We are told they are in California. I don't know, Mr. Speaker. Will he table the rest of the requisitions today?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, we'll get the information as soon as we can. But again, Mr. Speaker, we work with clients on a daily basis. We've been able to increase supports for our most vulnerable citizens when they need help, and that will continue, Mr. Speaker. But again my concern is our most vulnerable people here in our province, and finding them a warm place to stay when it happens to be minus 30 out here in Saskatchewan. It's unfortunate the NDP is more concerned about scoring political points.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, he can't even provide the requisitions. These answers are even worse than yesterday's answers, Mr. Speaker.

This whole file stinks. When Evelyn checked into the hotel she was charged \$132 a night. When the ministry was picking up the tab it was jacked up to \$200 a night. These are public dollars and the ministry needs to make sure Saskatchewan people aren't getting ripped off.

Reporters asked the minister why there's no policy to prevent this from happening. He didn't have an answer, Mr. Speaker. So I ask

the minister here: why are there no safeguards in place to ensure taxpayers aren't getting ripped off, and when is he going to shed some light on this mess?

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

[10:45]

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, the ministry, through caseworkers, works with individuals to try and find the best rate at that night when individuals are most vulnerable, and that is what happens. In this particular case, the individual checked in on their own and was not part of the income assistance situation. So, Mr. Speaker, I will continue to look at this and endeavour to get the appropriate information the member opposite is looking for.

But again at the bottom line, we want to look after, on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, the most vulnerable people in a very vulnerable situation, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to do that.

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

Government Attendance at Conference of Parties 28

Mr. Clarke: — Mr. Speaker, this government is wasting dollars through inflated hotel prices, and they're wasting nearly a million dollars for a pavilion in Dubai. The Premier has been crystal clear when it comes to his thoughts on climate change — he doesn't care. But now that's not stopping him from forcing Saskatchewan people to pay \$765,000 for a pavilion at a climate change conference.

How does the Sask Party square that circle, and how do they justify spending so much public money at a conference about a topic they've shown they care so little about?

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, the member should get his facts straight. First of all, that's not a million dollars on . . . Well apparently the member isn't done asking questions yet, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the pavilion that the members opposite are referring to, Mr. Speaker, is for promotional and office space for the 40-some-plus businesses that are accompanying the Premier to COP [Conference of Parties], Mr. Speaker, so we can promote the energy-efficient, the clean-energy companies that we have in this great province, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday the member from Walsh Acres stood on his feet . . . sorry, the other day the member stood on his feet and said, well why didn't Saskatchewan just go along with the Canadian pavilion, Mr. Speaker? Well here's why: we actually tried that approach, Mr. Speaker. We asked the federal government. We suggested 10 presentations, panel presentations that would be done at the pavilion, Mr. Speaker. Nine of the ten were turned down, Mr. Speaker, presentations such as carbon capture, sustainable CO₂, Mr. Speaker. The list goes on. I hope there's

more questions, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There certainly are more questions. Saskatchewan people work hard for their money. They want to see those public dollars spent wisely, not wasted on inflated hotel prices or on a vanity pavilion in Dubai. They want to see action on climate change, not a government that says the quiet part out loud: “I don’t care.” They want to see a government that tells our story but not wasting nearly a million dollars to do so.

Now the feds are hosting Danielle Smith for a fireside chat at their pavilion. A fireside chat, and we know that she’s no fan of the current federal government. Why do we need to pay nearly a million dollars for a pavilion when the Government of Alberta is fine to attend with the feds?

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, those 40-plus businesses that are accompanying the Premier are the reason that Saskatchewan’s leading the country in GDP, Mr. Speaker. Those companies are the reason that Saskatchewan is doing well, Mr. Speaker. Those are the companies that are employing Saskatchewan citizens, Mr. Speaker.

The list that we applied to the federal government, Mr. Speaker: sustainable nuclear power, not approved; sustainable supply chains for critical minerals, not approved. Sustainably powering the future for Saskatchewan uranium, federal government didn’t approve it, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan oil and gas sustainable policies, the federal government didn’t approve it. Mr. Speaker, that list goes on.

The one that was approved by the federal government, Mr. Speaker, was the Sustainable Saskatchewan reception, Mr. Speaker. But it was approved in the Canadian pavilion, that that member says that we should be using, for 45 minutes, Mr. Speaker. We have over 40 companies going, Mr. Speaker. Should we allocate one minute per company?

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

Fuel Tax and Government’s Fiscal Management

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are fed up with watching this tired and out-of-touch government waste their hard-earned public dollars. But you know, that’s their record over there time and time again: the bypass, the GTH [Global Transportation Hub], inflated hotel prices, a pavilion, and so much more. Now mismanagement of public dollars is always wrong, but it’s especially galling when regular people are struggling with the crushing cost of living and a government that’s only made it worse.

We’ve called on this government to scrap the tax on gas and diesel to give families a break at the pump. When with the Sask Party get on board and finally offer some cost-of-living relief for

people who so desperately deserve it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I think that member’s a little sensitive to the fact that I keep saying he’s good at criticism but never has a plan, because now he’s reached across the border and using the Manitoba NDP suggestion of the fuel tax. But let’s just compare living in Saskatchewan to living in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and let’s account for everything.

So when do Manitobans have to start to pay their provincial income tax? Well at \$36,842, Mr. Speaker. What is that in Saskatchewan? In Saskatchewan they do not pay provincial tax until \$49,720, Mr. Speaker. That means in Saskatchewan you can earn 12,000, over \$12,000 — 12,878 to be exact — without paying any provincial tax that you are being taxed on in Manitoba.

What does that tax account for? Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, why I calculated that too. That means that they have to pay \$1,390 more in income tax just on that small amount of money, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it’s been tax and squander by that Finance minister and that Sask Party government. And while this government mismanages the hard-earned public dollars of Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan people are breaking the bank just to fill the tank as they face this crushing cost of living and a government that’s only made it worse.

They can’t choose to drive less when they need to get to work or take kids to hockey or activities or to drive to town. For most, driving isn’t some luxury that people can choose just to cut back. In Saskatchewan it’s a necessity. Our plan would save families \$350, Mr. Speaker. Real dollars for real people, for real families.

Why does that Finance minister and that tired, old Sask Party think those dollars are better off in their coffers to be mismanaged, as we’ve seen, instead of in the pockets of Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as that member knows that this government decided instead of the \$350,000 focus on one thing, Mr. Speaker, that we were going to give every taxpayer in the province \$500. That’s 1,000 per couple that they could spend at their discretion on where their inflationary pressures were being felt in that household, Mr. Speaker.

I think \$500 per taxpayer is a little bit more than their suggestion, but I give them credit. At least this time they have a suggestion.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m pleased this side of the Assembly is united in calling for this government to cut the provincial gas tax to give residents cost-of-living relief at the

pumps. Our party began calling on the Premier to axe his provincial carbon tax on fuel during the Lumsden-Morse byelection.

Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador have all cut their provincial gas tax. Mr. Speaker, this year Saskatchewan had the second-highest jump of the consumer price index of all the provinces. Residents need relief.

Mr. Speaker, as a vast rural province, we have the highest per-person fuel consumption of all the provinces. We produce world-class oil and gas right here in Saskatchewan. Why won't the Premier give residents relief and axe his provincial carbon tax on fuel? Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the province doesn't have a carbon tax on fuel. So I don't know where the member opposite got her information, but she's misinformed on that. There is no carbon tax provincially.

What we are proposing however — which again is more than what the NDP are proposing — what we're proposing is that we will not charge the carbon tax on home fuel, Mr. Speaker. That will equate to approximately on average \$400 per household, Mr. Speaker. Is she going to support that?

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

Provision of Health Care Services

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's bad enough our ambulances aren't coming when called, now we are experiencing hospital brownouts for emergency services. The Tisdale Hospital's emergency and out-patient department was closed on October 20th and 21st. Closed, Mr. Speaker.

Residents across the province are telling me they are not confident their local hospital will be open and available to provide emergency services. They are forced to make choices about which hospital to drive their loved ones to, because they don't know which one will be open and ready to treat them.

This government's complete mismanagement of our health care system is forcing patients to play Russian roulette when making choices about their health. Do they call an ambulance? Will it even come? Do they drive to the hospital? Will the hospital's emergency service be open?

Mr. Speaker, does this government have any explanations for their complete mismanagement of our prepaid health services?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And of course this government does have a plan. It's a four-point plan that was announced a year ago, and it's a health human resources action plan. And it is working, Mr. Speaker. That plan recruits new health care providers, it trains more, and it's incentivizing and retaining, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen success over that plan. We will continue to see success with that plan. We know that there are pressures in our rural and remote health care facilities, Mr. Speaker, but that plan is addressing those. Those pressures are not unique to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, they're extended right across the country. And we will continue to address those problems right here at home. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

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

Parents' Bill of Rights

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Parents are contacting me by phone and email expressing their concern over this government's lack of commitment to Parents' Bill of Rights. When this Premier spoke to the media on Tuesday, he had no clue how it would be enforced, stating, "I don't know what the protocols are. I guess we could ask the school divisions at some point."

What is going on, Mr. Speaker? Who is in charge here? Can the Premier not even run his own ministry or enforce his own legislation? I think it's pretty clear from this statement he doesn't care.

Mr. Speaker, parents are upset. This Premier is once again caving on the issue. Dozens of parents are prepared to come to this legislature next week to demand answers from this government. Will the Premier give assurances on its implementation, or will these parents have to come to their Legislative Assembly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the whole parental bill of rights that we passed and we introduced as a policy earlier in the summer that became legislation in our special session just recently, Mr. Speaker, this policy was because we've heard from parents all around the province who want to be more involved in their child's education. We've done that by passing this legislation, Mr. Speaker, despite the opposition's opposition to this bill, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd remind the member opposite though that teachers in this province are direct employees of school divisions. Education is delivered between provincial government and locally elected school boards, Mr. Speaker. We trust our locally elected school divisions will follow *The Education Act* and the bill of rights that we've passed, Mr. Speaker, and we look forward to working with them on the implementation of that legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 151 — *The SaskEnergy (Carbon Tax Fairness for Families) Amendment Act, 2023*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 151, *The SaskEnergy (Carbon Tax Fairness for Families) Amendment Act, 2023* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 151 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

[11:00]

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

Saskatchewan's Economy and Federal Energy Policies

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to enter into today's debate. Unfortunately here we are again discussing how the federal government has impeded nearly every sector of our growing economy.

The national carbon tax was implemented on April 1st, 2019 at \$20 per tonne and was supposed to only increase each year by \$10 per tonne until 2022, when it was supposed to max out at 50. However since then we've seen the federal government increase it from the \$50 per tonne to \$65 per tonne in 2023, with plans to increase it to \$170 per tonne by 2030.

Since 1988 the Government of Canada has had at least a dozen climate plans, including the Kyoto Protocol, Copenhagen Accord, and the Paris Agreement. Yet the federal government has never imposed climate change management strategies with scope, scale, and speed it has since 2015. That is why it is being said that the plan is always ever-changing.

The current federal government has launched over 2,500 unique climate initiatives, introduced and changed Canada's carbon tax six times in as many years, and they've revised the national greenhouse gas emissions targets seven times since 2015. The federal government policies are costing Saskatchewan's natural resource sector investment and jobs. The federal government's constant changing of climate policies really do limit opportunities to move forward.

Saskatchewan has the resources that drive innovation, fuel growth, and improve a better way of life. The pursuing of a climate agenda is being pushed by the federal government with very little knowledge or understanding of its impact, moving forward without thought or minimal input from provinces, and having this ideology, the one-size-fits-all approach that only works for a few Canadians.

Every single day affordability comes up here in this House. It is due to the federal climate policies which are causing undue hardship on families, businesses, and entire sectors of the economy that is being stifled to achieve limited or very marginal progress in addressing climate change.

The province of Saskatchewan has shown it is possible to achieve both economic and environmental goals in unison, most recently reducing greenhouse emissions from venting and flaring at upstream oil facilities by 65 per cent below 2015 levels while increasing production.

The constant shifting of policies and targets continues to hamper competitiveness, discourage investment, limit trade, and therefore reduces employment opportunities and harms the Saskatchewan way of life.

Canada's parliamentary budget officer expects the clean fuel regulations alone will cost the average Saskatchewan household an extra \$1,117 in 2030. This supports the Saskatchewan white paper, *Drawing the Line*, which indicated that Saskatchewan's economy would suffer by over \$100 billion in 2035.

Just days before the energy and minerals minister conference, the federal government shared several hundred pages of material, fully knowing that provinces would not have the time to review and analyze the material before weighing in on Canada's energy and resource future. Just another example of how the federal government impedes our province's economic growth.

Recent research done suggests that carbon taxes and pricing systems do not significantly reduce emissions. The University of Toronto research has shown that aggregate reductions from carbon pricing on emissions are limited to between zero and 2 per cent. For comparison, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states that global net human-caused carbon dioxide emissions must fall by 45 per cent from 2010 levels by 2030 to limit global warming by only 1.5 degrees Celsius, reaching net zero around 2050.

Our government's very proud of this province and the efforts that have been made thus far to build climate resistance and pursue sustainable growth. Local farmers have sequestered 12.8 million tonnes of carbon through zero-till practices in 2020, more than any other Canadian province and the same as taking 2.78 million cars off the road. SaskPower's Boundary dam has captured 4.6 million tonnes of CO₂ since it opened, about the same as planting over 69 million trees and letting them grow for over 10 years. And Saskatchewan's pulse producers captured 2.15 million tonnes of carbon in 2021, equivalent to taking 467,000 cars off the road.

The federal government has further complicated matters by setting targets without the full understanding of the outcomes of existing policies. Emissions data normally takes years to develop and are notorious for frequent revisions. This data deficiency has led the federal government to revise its greenhouse emissions and move the goalposts seven times over the last nine years.

The clean fuel regulations that began on July 1st, 2023 has already increased costs for consumers and has negatively impacted Saskatchewan's competitiveness, particularly in the agriculture, mining, forestry, oil and gas, and transportation

sectors. At this time up to 3 billion in Saskatchewan investments are at risk to relocating.

Our government is awaiting an announcement on the Natural Resources Canada engagement that occurred from May to July of 2023. The United States *Inflation Reduction Act*, which introduced a clean fuels production credit, makes biofuels production in the United States very attractive and will essentially pull investments away from building domestic supply right here in Canada. Another example of the federal government moving forward without consideration of the supply-demand issues as well as the impact of inflation.

The Canadian fuel regulation standard federal regulatory impact assessment admits that rural households will be more heavily impacted unless choices are made to either switch personal vehicles over to electric vehicles or to just simply not drive as much. Mr. Speaker, this just does not work for the people of our province that live in rural areas.

Bill C-69, the *Impact Assessment Act*, sets out a complex framework for designating certain projects for review, analyzing their adverse effects on areas in federal jurisdiction, and weighing mitigation measures and sustainability concerns. The law grew out of a major campaign promise from the Liberals in the 2015 election and has produced heated controversy ever since. Catherine McKenna, the then Environment minister, said at that time that better rules would protect the environment while improving investor confidence and making the Canadian energy and resource sector more competitive. However this has not gone on according to the Liberal plan. The government's own *Energy Fact Book* says that capital expenditures in the energy sector dropped 44 per cent between 2014 and 2021.

It has been said that this has contributed to the slow bleed of Canada. This legislation is also responsible for the financial loss of tens of billions in investment, as well as thousands of jobs across many provinces and ultimately economic sectors. Westerners, Mr. Speaker, have found themselves increasingly under a sustained attack from Ottawa, resulting in a . . . [inaudible] . . . of separatist rhetoric that had been dormant for over 40 years, ironically so since the days of Pierre Trudeau's national energy program.

In the ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada on Friday, October 13th, five out of seven judges said the *Impact Assessment Act* is largely unconstitutional because it seeks to regulate activities that fall within provincial jurisdiction. The court ruling will make a very real difference for projects that are being proposed within the boundaries of one province; however transmission lines or pipelines will still be subject to federal assessment.

Bill C-69 has basically a bunch of subjective standards that made it almost impossible for a certain kind of project to be approved. A report from the Canada West Foundation published earlier this year found that out of the 25 projects submitted under the federal *Impact Assessment Act* since 2019, almost all remain in the first two phases of a four-part approval process. How does any of this help Saskatchewan's economy, Mr. Speaker?

In July of 2022, the Government of Canada released a discussion paper detailing plans for emissions from the oil and gas sector to be capped at current levels and decline at a pace to reach net zero

by 2050. Similar requirements are not planned for other industry sectors.

Again, one resource sector in Canada is being carved out and essentially being treated differently than another. Pending the design, the oil and gas sector emissions cap may effectively act as a limit on oil and gas production within Canada. An outline of the design was expected from the federal government in early 2023, and all we've heard so far is crickets. It's now expected to be released in late 2023. Today, mid-November, and absolutely still nothing.

Saskatchewan did provide feedback on the options to cap and cut oil and gas sector greenhouse gas emissions to achieve 2030 goals that was released in July of 2022. This document proposed regulatory options to achieve a net zero target of 2050 but was silent on the costs to industry.

The federal government is considering two regulatory options. First, a new cap-and-trade system under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* which would require the establishment and administration of a completely new system. Second, a modification of the curb in carbon pricing regime under the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, which involves creating a higher, sector-specific carbon price for oil and gas.

Oil and gas emissions in Saskatchewan, as reported to the United Nations by the Government of Canada, indicated that emissions have been on a distinct downward trend since 2015. Nationally, oil and gas sector emissions have continued to increase. I think this simply means that globally there is much to be learned. As it has been stated before in this House by our Premier, if more countries sequestered oil as we do here in Saskatchewan, there would be a 25 per cent reduction in total emissions.

Currently the 2023 estimate for oil production is 456,700 barrels per day. The current combined estimate for 2023 value of oil and gas production is 13.1 billion. There are also approximately 180 companies that currently operate actively producing oil and gas wells in Saskatchewan. Oil and gas are significant economic boosters and needs to not only grow, but be protected from infringement by our federal Liberal-NDP coalition government.

When it comes to the fertilizer emissions cap, Mr. Speaker, the goal is for farmers across the country to reduce emissions that come from synthetic fertilizers by 30 per cent by 2030 from the 2020 levels. Mr. Speaker, farming generates about 8 per cent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. These greenhouse gases come from a variety of sources. Diesel and gas-powered machinery is used to till fields, plant seeds, apply fertilizers, harvest crops, and transport the food to market.

Again, Canadian farmers are already among the most sustainable growers in the world. They have less room to lower fertilizer emissions without compromising food production than those in other countries. As we all know, there are only eight growing seasons until 2030, and these targets are ridiculous when you consider that we export most of our grain products that helps feed the world. It's a shame that the federal government doesn't recognize and credit us for the carbon capture that our farmers have been sequestering for the last 40 years with their no-till practices, simply because they were way ahead of their time with their forward thinking in reducing greenhouse gas emissions

before our federal government even thought it was a concern.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is this. It doesn't matter if it is the federal carbon tax, the clean fuel standard, Bill C-69, the oil production cap, the clean electricity standard, or the fertilizer emissions cap. There are significant impacts to every single one of us. It doesn't matter if you simply are a consumer who likes to light and heat your home, or you are a farmer trying to feed the people of Saskatchewan and export feed to the rest of the world, or you're even just the person extracting the oil from the ground. Each one of us is impacted by these stacking regulations.

In speaking to affordability issues, the challenge has just begun, and it will continue to get more difficult for families if the federal government continues to dampen the economic success of this province.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll move the following motion:

That this Assembly demands the Liberal-NDP coalition Government of Canada end policies that would constitute an attack on Saskatchewan's economic growth and energy production, including but not limited to the federal carbon tax, the clean fuel standard, Bill C-69, the oil production cap, the clean electricity standard, and the fertilizer emissions cap; and further,

That this Assembly denounces the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party for their support of these policies.

I do so move. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[11:15]

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford:

That this Assembly demands the Liberal-NDP coalition Government of Canada end policies that would constitute an attack on Saskatchewan's economic growth and energy production, including but not limited to the federal carbon tax, the clean fuel standard, Bill C-69, the oil production cap, the clean electricity standard, and the fertilizer emissions cap; and further,

That this Assembly denounces the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party for their support of these policies.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a shame, Mr. Speaker, that the government has decided to spend more time in this Chamber discussing positions that we have been clear on for a long time.

We don't support the federal carbon tax. We support pipelines. We support our agriculture sector. We support our oil and gas workers. We support Saskatchewan people and the Saskatchewan economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But just to be clear, Mr. Speaker, we don't support the clause in the motion that denounces the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party.

Now I'll spend a little bit of time going over the timeline again for members opposite because it doesn't seem like they actually pay attention in here when we're speaking. On October 26th, the Prime Minister of Canada announced the government was implementing a three-year exemption to the carbon tax for people in Atlantic Canada on home heating oil. Now the very next day, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and to remind members opposite — I introduced a motion to the Assembly calling on the Government of Canada to extend that relief of the carbon tax across the country on all home heating.

And I'll actually read that motion again, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

That the Assembly expresses deep concern over the unfair decision by the Government of Canada to allow oil used for home heating to be exempt from the federal carbon tax, while offering no relief to families in Saskatchewan who rely on natural gas; and

That the Assembly expresses deep concern over the divisive comments made by the Minister of Rural Economic Development, the Honourable Gудie Hutchings, on October 28th, 2023, in which she blames Canadians living on the prairies for the unfair choices of the Liberal government; and

That the Assembly calls on all parties in the Parliament of Canada to quickly work to remove the federal carbon tax from all forms of home heating for all Canadians.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm confused about which part of that motion suggests that we are in favour of the carbon tax. Now what I'm not confused about is the fact that all the members opposite voted in favour of the motion — the motion that the Saskatchewan NDP introduced. Now our leader has been clear about where we stand. I've been clear on where I stand. We don't support the federal carbon tax.

Now when it comes to the clean electricity regulations, the truth is, because of 16 years of the Sask Party government's mismanagement of the provincial electricity grid and SaskPower and its deliberate attacks on renewable energy, our power grid is in a bad state of affairs. Because of this government's mismanagement, our provincial Crown and the Saskatchewan grid is in a tough spot, financially and structurally. And that's all this government's record. Now an NDP government is committed to investing in renewable energy that is affordable for Saskatchewan people.

Now here's the thing, Mr. Speaker. We know that the Sask Party's inability to reduce emissions provincially has a negative impact for a number of businesses in this province. One of those businesses is Evraz steel. Now Evraz is not able to get its pipe green-certified and get a premium price for that pipe because our electricity grid relies too heavily on fossil fuels. We know that there are other companies who won't look at Saskatchewan to invest in or build a mine in or set up shop here because our electricity grid relies too heavily on fossil fuels. And these companies have a commitment to make their products in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. Now the Saskatchewan economy is missing out because of that.

I want to go back to Evraz for a second because here is a

Saskatchewan story we should be shouting from the rooftops, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Evraz is a giant recycling facility. All their pipe and steel is produced from old steel. But perhaps more impressive is the advancements in the water reduction to make that steel. Now Evraz steel only uses 1 litre of water when other steel mills in this country use 28 litres of water to produce the same amount of steel. Now that water is treated on site and they have zero wastewater discharge — pretty impressive. Moreover when it comes to emissions, Evraz's electric-arc furnace produces 75 per cent less emissions than a traditional furnace that is used out in Eastern Canada.

Now the last thing that I want to mention is the fact that Regina Evraz steel is the only place in North America that is certified to make hydrogen pipe, one of two places in the world. Now this is cutting-edge technology and advancement. This is innovation right here in Saskatchewan, and it's something that we are very proud of.

But sadly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, most people on the pipe production side at Evraz have been laid off. Producing steel pipe at Evraz keeps good jobs in this city. And when we are building and replacing pipes across Canada, we should be using pipe from this facility at Evraz in Regina. Where has been the championing of this story by this government? It's been crickets.

Now let's be clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Climate change is real. One thing that I learned from Dr. Peter Sauchyn at the University of Regina a few years ago was that Saskatchewan and Mongolia have the most variable climate in the world, which is fascinating to think about. It's our normal to go from minus 40 to plus 40 in a year. Now nowhere else in the world has a fluctuating climate like we have here. Therefore we're used to big temperature fluctuations. We're used to drought. We're used to extreme weather events.

However when you drill down into the data from Saskatchewan, it is undeniable that our winters are getting significantly warmer. We are seeing our growing seasons getting significantly longer with more frost-free days. We are seeing more extreme weather events and we're seeing more extreme droughts.

And we are seeing the economic impacts of these realities affecting us here in Saskatchewan. For example, in 2021 we see Saskatchewan's largest crop insurance payout in our history, \$2.4 billion due to a record drought. This year, 2023, we had a record-breaking number of payments in the forage rain insurance program totalling \$60.4 million. 2023, this year again saw one of the most severe wildfire seasons on record. Approximately 1.9 million hectares of land was burned in Saskatchewan in wildfires. That's about five times the size of Prince Albert National Park.

What was the cost of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from fighting the fires to the cost of evacuating residents, to rebuilding the damaged infrastructure? We see water shortages today in Cumberland House, right now a direct result from the drought. We need Saskatchewan solutions, and we need a government who's willing to find those solutions.

Now last night I attended the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, or PNWER, reception. We had a number of delegates in the House today. It's an organization that brings together

politicians and decision makers from across Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, BC, the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Washington State, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Alaska. And it was so great, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to meet a number of delegates from across those areas.

At the event last night, a video was shown promoting Saskatchewan to this group of visiting dignitaries. Now the video was fantastic, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It talked about us and the number of lakes and the open spaces, and us as an exporter — lentils, durum, peas, etc. I was proud of this video, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In it, it talked about that we have the critical minerals needed to address climate change.

And it flashed on the screen — which I think is vital and an opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on those critical minerals — but it flashed on the screen that this government is committed to net zero emissions by 2050. And I've got to say, I was shocked to see that. This government right here is committed to net zero by 2050. Come on, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Clearly someone in government understands that the world is moving to net zero, and yet this is a government that has repeatedly groaned and laughed when climate change is mentioned in this Assembly.

So what is it? Is climate change real or is it a conspiracy? Are you committed to net zero by 2050? Or is the Premier's stance, I don't care, the policy? If you are committed to net zero, that you are clearly advertising to these international partners, then where is your plan to get there?

Saskatchewan New Democrats are committed to working with industry, with Saskatchewan people, innovators, problem solvers . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Arm River.

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, after that quite frankly I'm not sure where to begin on that. But you know, let's begin by talking a little bit about horses, I think.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I'm actually really not a horse guy. I kind of like them. I do like them. I never really grew up around them. Been on the odd horse, yeah, a little bit. But we had a horse named Sparky out on the farm. It was an old chore horse, and my dad used to walk it up to the yard each fall, and we'd have a, you know, place for it. And he'd prop me up there, and I'd hang on tight and be terrified for the whole journey. But other than that, like honestly I really don't know much about horses.

But I do know something. I do know something. I do know the difference between a workhorse and thoroughbred. You see, Mr. Speaker, a workhorse, a workhorse, they're strong. They are set out to do specific tasks. They're led. They're controlled. And then there's the thoroughbred. The thoroughbred, bred for speed, bred for running. And there's two keys to a thoroughbred really: know where you're going and then run as hard as you can.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you. Why — and that member opposite is wondering — why am I telling you this? Anyways, well I'll tell you. When Saskatchewan was established as a province so many years ago, we were seen as a workhorse, a chore horse for Eastern Canada. We really were. But, Mr.

Speaker, I'll tell you, things have changed. And we certainly will always be the workhorse. It's bred into us. We're hard-working people. But we are also a thoroughbred now here in Saskatchewan.

But here's the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the stack of federal policies are actually ropes around our neck, our horse's neck, and are holding us back, Mr. Speaker. Ropes like the carbon tax that the members oppose; ropes like the clean fuel standard; ropes like Bill C-69, the no-more-pipelines rope; ropes like the cap on oil production; ropes like the clean electricity standard; and ropes like the fertilizer emission cap.

Mr. Speaker, these are ropes that are an attack on our economic growth and our energy production in this province. These are ropes that were put forth and put on us by our coalition federal government, the Liberal-NDP federal government, and these are ropes that are directly and indirectly supported by members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, other jurisdictions, other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, they are running in a race with us and against us. And quite frankly many of them don't have ropes around their neck, and they actually in some cases have a lot of tailwinds too, pushing them. Our horse needs to be allowed to run here, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll tell you, this is so frustrating, so very frustrating because there is so much at stake here at home. I look at what's at stake. What's at stake is the growth. What's at stake is our potential. What's at stake are our families. What's at stake are our communities. What's at stake are our livelihoods and our quality of life that we're able to provide for the people of this province.

But there's also some other things at stake, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's so much at stake globally as well. We, Mr. Speaker, hold the answers to the world's questions. Questions like, how are we going to reduce global emissions? Questions like, how are we going to feed a growing population? These policies quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are irresponsible.

[11:30]

Take for instance the policy to reduce fertilizer emission by 30 per cent. This rope is a noose around the neck of our sustainable ag sector, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And this is a policy no doubt created by those who probably have never had dirt on their boots, nor struggled to grow a crop, nor struggled to pay the bills while at the same time trying to figure out how to feed the world. These are probably not the same people who have had that concern and that worry of how to put food on their table, at the same time putting food on others' tables as well, Mr. Speaker.

This is a policy, Mr. Speaker, that treats farmers, treats them like culprits that just willy-nilly go out and want to spread as much fertilizer on the land as they possibly can, maybe doing so under the shroud of darkness and in secrecy. It treats them as being irresponsible.

But here's the reality check, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When a semi pulls into a yard, a farmyard, with a load of fertilizer, we're looking at upwards of a 45, \$40,000 investment that that operation is making into production, into feeding the world.

Farmers try hard not to use fertilizer and try to use it as efficiently as possible. They try so hard. They do soil testing. They use technology like variable-rate technology. They incorporate the 4Rs, putting fertilizer on the . . . the right fertilizer and the right rate, the right time, and the right place.

And you know, I have quite a large constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 22 RMs [rural municipality]. And I have never, never in the time I've been an MLA, even before that, met a farmer who has wanted to use more fertilizer. So if you want to talk about irresponsible, it certainly is this federal policy.

Consider the impact. Consider the impact on our Saskatchewan economy, consider the impact on our families, and consider the impact on our ability to feed the world. And consider something else for a moment if you would. Consider the world's population. In 1972, when I was born — it was a fantastic year; we actually scored a pretty important goal in this country — there were 3.8 billion people on the planet. That's 3.8 billion. Last November we hit a milestone of 8 billion people on the planet, and it's projected to be in the neighbourhood of 9.7 to 10 billion people by 2050 which is just around the corner, Mr. Speaker.

And so here's the question: how will we feed this growth? Because this growth that we're looking at from now to 2050 is the equivalent of adding another United States of America and India to our planet. How are we going to feed these people?

Here's another reality check, Mr. Speaker. Food doesn't come from a grocery store. Food's sold in a grocery store. Food comes from our farms. Food comes from our ranchers. Food comes from Saskatchewan and so does energy, Mr. Speaker, our oil, our gas, our uranium, and so does our lumber, and so does our fertilizer, Mr. Speaker.

And unlike this one federal policy would suggest, our ag sector is responsible. It's responsible for pioneering zero-till farming practices. It's responsible for developing plant and animal science to increase efficiency. It's responsible for increasing production. It's responsible for feeding the world, and it's responsible for lowering global emissions, Mr. Speaker, because no one does it better than we do here.

Our grains, when you compare them to our competitors, Mr. Speaker — we've heard a number of times in this House — they just win hands-down. The emission intensity of our grains, when you look at canola, compared to our competitors, 65 per cent better; peas, 95 per cent better, Mr. Speaker.

But actually while I am on the topic of emissions, this is one area where our Saskatchewan horse certainly needs to be let to run. Our sustainable resource production is the solution, Mr. Speaker, to lowering our global emissions because, quite frankly, the more of sustainable Saskatchewan and its products that are produced and exported around the world, quite frankly the better, Mr. Speaker. Products from our ag sector, our forestry sector, our mining sector, our uranium, our soon-to-be-more copper, our potash, our manufacturing sector, and our oil and gas sector — these, Mr. Speaker, these are the answer to what the world wants and what the world needs. And we certainly on this side of the House will continue to support these sustainable industries.

We'll continue to stand up against federal policies, supported by

the members opposite, that would jeopardize this province's extraordinary potential. If we don't stand up for Saskatchewan, both at home and globally, who's going to do it? Members opposite do not want us travelling around the world. If we do not support our industries, who will do it? I'll tell you who will do it, Mr. Speaker. We will, on this side of the House.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I do support the motion put forth by my colleague, the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford. Thank you.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's another 75-minute debate and another opportunity, Mr. Speaker, for us to talk about our positions on this issue which — I'm not sure if the member from Arm River was listening — but we've been crystal clear on this, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to be. The Leader of the Opposition has been crystal clear on this.

And we're able to do that in the House, outside of the House, into microphones, on social media. Mr. Speaker, we're able to take those conversations into any room. Because if you have the same conversation in every room, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty easy to remember what you've said — because what you've said is the truth.

And we've been crystal clear on this, Mr. Speaker, and we will be no matter how many 75-minute debates that we do. So where to begin, Mr. Speaker? I'm struggling to actually read here; I don't know if this is part of aging or what, but the old eyes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, aren't what they used to be. So another 75-minute debate. We've been crystal clear on this, Mr. Speaker.

So let's refresh where we've already been, and then I'm quite confident where we will continue to go over the course of this 75-minute debate. The Saskatchewan NDP does not support the federal carbon tax, no matter how many times the members opposite want to say it. We do not support any of these policies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which represent federal overreach and intrusions that the federal government is undertaking to make life more expensive, harder for people or businesses in Saskatchewan.

And let's be clear. And you know, to the members opposite, you can give the old heads a shake. We are opposed to federal policies that represent overreach and that wade into areas of clear provincial jurisdiction. This is a proud, proud part of our legacy in this province, the Saskatchewan New Democrats in this province, and we are proud of the work that former premiers Blakeney and Romanow undertook to ensure that natural resources remain in the jurisdiction of provinces, Mr. Speaker. So again, don't support the carbon tax.

Clean electricity regulations, we've talked about these too. Unrealistic. Ignorant to the realities that Saskatchewan faces and, especially with the *Inflation Reduction Act* in the United States, largely, largely unachievable, Mr. Speaker.

Pipelines: a safe, clear method of transportation and a good source of work for our remarkable steelworkers at Evraz and for

people all across the province, Mr. Speaker.

So we've been clear on our position on C-69, the oil production cap and the fertilizer emission cap. Mr. Speaker, we can do this all day.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, members will be thrilled. We're not just interested in negativity, Mr. Speaker. What we are interested in on this side of the House: better jobs, bigger paycheques for Saskatchewan people, and the number one issue that Saskatchewan people care about, cost of living.

We are interested, Mr. Speaker, on real progress for this province and for investing in innovation in traditional industries that work for Saskatchewan's people and economy. And our leader, leader of Saskatchewan's NDP, has been darned clear about this.

We used to lead the nation. Led the nation in innovations. We've led the nation in power generation, in having a remarkable Crown corporation and asset, a jewel, in SaskPower.

We used to be leaders in Canada on renewable power generation as well. When this government took over 16 years ago, they were committed to this. We used to lead. And now, you're right. The member from Canora-Pelly is right. We're dead last. We're laggards. This is a government who says "I don't care" when faced with the reality of climate change, a government who calls it "witchcraft reasoning," a government that killed the solar industry here in Saskatchewan. Talk about picking winners and losers, Mr. Speaker.

A government that has no transparency for workers in Estevan at Westmoreland, at Boundary, no plan for people in Coronach trying to figure out what to do, if their house is going to be worth any money.

A government that has mismanaged SaskPower, a monopoly that they run, into a position of an historic nearly \$200 million loss, Mr. Speaker. Imagine that. Running a monopoly, hiking rates not once, not twice, but three times during a generational cost-of-living crisis, still managing to pull millions of dollars in dividends out of it, and still losing money. It is a feat truly that could only be accomplished by the Sask Party government.

They continue, Mr. Speaker, to pull these millions of dollars from the Crowns to paper over their mismanagement and waste, and they continue to allow good-paying union jobs in Saskatchewan to go to out-of-province companies, pay out-of-province companies to profit and profiteer off our tax dollars, Mr. Speaker.

And while this government is happy to let those good jobs, those skilled workers, all of that money flee the province, we actually have a plan, Mr. Speaker. Members opposite have been saying, oh, the NDP party has no plan. We do. The Leader of the Opposition is committed to hire Saskatchewan. It's common sense, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our tax dollars should be going to support Saskatchewan jobs, Saskatchewan families. Talk to any employer in this province about the labour shortage and they will say, let's keep Saskatchewan people here; let's keep them working and building Saskatchewan with our own money, our own tax dollars.

And, Mr. Speaker, this should be relevant for that tax-happy

government over there because, speaking of the carbon tax, this year the \$65-a-tonne fuel charge from the carbon tax in Saskatchewan is going to reach, I believe it's \$962 million. Well, Mr. Speaker, this government's provincial PST [provincial sales tax] tax hike has cost taxpayers just as much every single year since its inception in 2017. I'll quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Since 2017 when the PST was hiked, GDP growth in Saskatchewan has averaged second-worst in the country. GDP per capita languishes barely above pandemic levels. Worse yet, in the last eight years the province has only added 20,000 jobs.

This is a government that's opposed to the carbon tax, as are we, Mr. Speaker, as we've said time and time and time again and will continue to say. But this is a government who is taxing Saskatchewan people all the way to their own piggy bank. You are taxing Saskatchewan people since 2017 more than the carbon tax every single year, Mr. Speaker. Let's revisit that number: \$962 million a year is what you have taxed people every single year while stifling economic growth, stifling any kind of development.

And now I understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the members opposite want to stay in their comfort zone, feel a little bit better heading into the weekend, and yet they continue to do nothing. They do nothing on the cost of living, Mr. Speaker. And it was a year ago . . . In reviewing for this, I was looking at old *Hansards*. Like God, how many 75-minute debates have we done on this topic? I imagine we'll do at least five or six more, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[11:45]

A year ago, November 17th, 2022 we were talking about this in the House. I don't know if they've got a calendar that they just flip over every year. But it was a year ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Doug Ford introduced fuel relief in Ontario. We've been calling for this for almost two years, Mr. Speaker. And in politics the perennial question, the number one question is, are you better off than you were last year, two years ago, five years ago? Is your life more expensive? And for people in this province the answer is a resounding no.

You know, the member from Arm River wanted to talk about the grocery store, and I think that's a really, really good place to end, Mr. Speaker. Because right now the reality that we have in Saskatchewan is Saskatchewan people are choosing between groceries and heating their homes. People who have never struggled to pay their bills are reaching for items in the grocery store, looking at the price, and putting them back.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a government who is doing everything they can to make life more expensive, hiking power rates 8 per cent in a generational cost-of-living crisis, and doing nothing but . . .

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

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Canada has had several climate change plans since 1988. Until the election of Justin Trudeau in 2015, we have

never seen a federal government impose climate management strategies with such wide scope, scale, and speed. With the Trudeau-Singh coalition government, we have them moving faster and imposing more heavy-handed, economic-killing policies.

This short-sighted coalition government, supported by those NDP members opposite, have imposed a change to the federal carbon tax six times in six years and revised national greenhouse gas emission targets seven times since 2015. These failed policies, failed tax policies have caused undue hardships for Saskatchewan's economic growth. While these failed carbon taxes and climate policies have slowed and injured Saskatchewan's economic growth, it has also directly impacted the hard-working people of this province by driving up the cost of living. An ever-increasing federal carbon tax on Canadians is directly and indirectly increasing the cost of living across this country. We have said this for years, and for years the Trudeau government has ignored our pleas.

More recently the Bank of Canada governor has also admitted the federal carbon tax is contributing to inflation, inflation the Bank of Canada is now trying to control by raising interest rates, higher interest rates that will continue to put pressure on Saskatchewan residents and businesses. This is sounding more and more like the Trudeau-Singh coalition government is the primary cause of inflation and the high cost of living for Canadians, sort of like a dog chasing its tail.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, most recently Prime Minister Trudeau, backed by several East Coast Liberal members of parliament, said his coalition government would pause the carbon tax on home heating oil for three years. The Prime Minister is now admitting that his federally imposed carbon tax is driving up the cost of living for Canadians. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have been saying this for years.

It is interesting to note that Trudeau-Singh government has continued to sell the carbon tax to Canadians as a price on pollution. It's a tax. They said you would get a rebate, get back what you paid in carbon tax. If that were indeed true, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they would have increased the carbon tax on home heating oil. That way they would get bigger rebates and be able to heat their homes and put food on the table. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it doesn't work that way. A carbon tax makes it more expensive. It is driving up the cost of living, more of the dog chasing its tail. Eventually the dog learns that it's his own tail it's been chasing. Finally our Prime Minister has caught his tail and realized the carbon tax is increasing the cost of living.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, here in Saskatchewan we want to be treated fairly. We want you to be treated fairly. Your government wants the natural gas that heats your homes to be exempted from the carbon tax, similar to the recent announcement by the Trudeau government. After all, Canadians should be treated fairly across the country regardless of who they vote for.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, over 40 years ago the people of Saskatchewan were early adopters of clean energy, early adopters in changing over their home heating from oil, coal, and electrical to a cleaner, more convenient and less expensive energy. Government and residents invested in a network of gas lines to cities, towns, villages, and farms. Gas lines providing a

cleaner option for heating your homes, early adopters in lowering emissions, and all this was done without a carbon tax.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is very similar to our farmers not being recognized for their climate-saving practices. They were leaders in zero-till and minimal tillage farming practices in the 1980s. These farming practices of yesterday are not getting the recognition they deserve today. Today's farming practices are continually improving. Improvements are being developed as a desire to be better, not because of a carbon tax.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to ensure residents of Saskatchewan are treated fairly with other Canadian residents mainly in the eastern provinces, the Premier announced that as of January 1st, 2024 SaskEnergy will no longer collect nor remit carbon tax on the natural gas used to heat Saskatchewan homes. This will result in residents paying significantly less to heat their homes, and they will be able to use these savings to pay for putting food on the table.

Carbon tax makes everything more expensive. This Justin-Jagmeet coalition is just not worth the cost. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the Prime Minister has now acknowledged, the carbon tax is indeed making everything more expensive. It is not the only federal initiative costing Canadians more. The clean fuel standard will drive up the cost of gasoline and diesel fuel. These regulations are intended to reduce greenhouse emissions. These same regulations will force refiners to make changes and additions to their refining process, changes that will increase the cost per litre of fuel to an estimated 17 cents per litre.

Higher costs coming out of the refinery will mean higher costs for consumers and businesses across Canada. I say Canada specifically because there is a carve-out. Apparently the clean fuel regulations do not apply to aviation gasoline or fuel exported from Canada. I'm just guessing there must be less emissions from gasoline and diesel burned in the sky and out of the country. Nothing like sticking it to the people at home, Justin.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not just the NDP in Ottawa supporting the Justin-Jagmeet coalition government. It is the members opposite. According to the member from Saskatoon Nutana, the need for a carbon tax is "not up for debate any longer." She said that. "We know that it's time for ambitious climate action using all of the tools at our disposal, including the most cost-effective regulatory and market-based approaches such as placing a price on carbon."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only effective outcome of a carbon tax is that it is effectively driving up the cost of living. Inflation and the cost of living will continue to increase with ever-increasing carbon tax, increasing to \$170 per tonne by 2030. We can't afford it, and we can't afford those NDP members that can't stop supporting it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member for Saskatoon Nutana did not stop there. She also said, "We don't think of the carbon tax as a tax. This is a price on pollution and a necessary one."

The federal government's carbon tax is not an environmental plan. It's a failed tax plan. Mr. Speaker, carbon taxes and other federal environmental regulations continue to be a burden on business — businesses that are competing with world markets,

world markets that don't have to pay a carbon tax. This severely places our companies at a disadvantage to their competitors. We want our people and businesses to have the Saskatchewan advantage. I implore the NDP members opposite to withdraw their support for their leader, Jagmeet Singh, as long as he supports the Justin Trudeau government.

I will be supporting the motion put forward by my good friend and colleague from Cut Knife-Turtleford and seconded by my good friend and colleague from Arm River. The motion reads as follows:

That this Assembly demands the Liberal-NDP coalition Government of Canada end policies that would constitute an attack on Saskatchewan's economic growth and energy production, including but not limited to the federal carbon tax, the clean fuel standard, Bill C-69, the oil production cap, the clean electricity standard, and the fertilizer emissions cap; and further,

That this Assembly denounces the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party for their support of these failed policies.

God bless Canada. God bless Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm very excited to enter into this debate, especially after what we've been hearing from the members opposite. I mean it's no surprise, this debate topic. We've done this debate topic at least a dozen times since I've been elected over the last seven years, although they did add this little clause at the end about denouncing the Sask NDP.

And we saw the member opposite, the member for Cannington, emphatically pointing his finger at us today, just really emphatic about his disdain for the Sask NDP. I remind that member of something that I learned when I was younger, that when you're pointing a finger, there's three pointing right back at you.

And there's a lot that this government could be doing to help the pocketbooks of Saskatchewan residents, Mr. Speaker. And I'm looking forward to spending the next few minutes reminding members opposite about the things that they could be doing to help Saskatchewan residents today, while at the same time standing up for Saskatchewan federally in denouncing these federal policies that are so negatively hurting Saskatchewan residents.

Now I don't know what's going on on the other side. Like I've said before, this old, tired government seems to be suffering from some pretty serious short-term memory loss, Mr. Speaker. They are so old at this point they can't seem to tell the difference between fact and fiction, which is why we're so happy to have this 75-minute debate topic so we can once again have the opportunity to put our position on the record, which we've done many times already. But clearly from the responses from members opposite, we have to do it again, Mr. Speaker. And we will continue to remind them, again and again and again, because they seem to continue to need that reminder.

You know, a colleague just told me today that a really good . . . It wasn't advice for me, let's be clear, but it has been told to me before that God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason. And it is really good advice that maybe members opposite should be listening more so that they could hear what our positions are, so they do not have to continue to really embarrass themselves, Mr. Speaker, by continuing on with these tired lines about what we support and what we don't support, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And this has been really interesting over the past several weeks. You know, as has already been discussed a few weeks ago, the federal Prime Minister announced an exemption for the carbon tax for home heating pumps, and essentially that's going to support Eastern Canada and doesn't really do much for Western Canada, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, we cannot rely on that sort of electricity and home heating in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We stood up and talked about how unfair that was to Saskatchewan residents, and we actually introduced a motion. This government is so choked that we were the ones who introduced that motion that they keep spinning in a million different directions, trying to change the narrative and change reality.

But *Hansard* doesn't lie, and the motion was introduced by my friend, my colleague, the member from Regina Walsh Acres. I'm going to read it very slowly for members opposite because they seem to have forgotten what happened in this House three weeks ago.

[12:00]

And it says . . . And like I said, two ears, one mouth. I hope they hear it this time. We were all here when it happened, but they seem to have forgotten what happened three weeks ago. The motion read:

That the Assembly expresses deep concern over the unfair decision by the Government of Canada to allow oil used for home heating to be exempt from the federal carbon tax, while offering no relief to families in Saskatchewan who rely on natural gas; and

That the Assembly expresses deep concern over the divisive comments made by the Minister of Rural Economic Development, the Honourable Gudie Hutchings, on October 28th, 2023, in which she blames Canadians living on the prairies for the unfair choices of the Liberal government; and

That the Assembly calls on all parties [all parties, Mr. Speaker] in the Parliament of Canada to quickly work to remove the federal carbon tax from all forms of home heating for all Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, that's in *Hansard* for those who maybe forget, seem to not be able to know the difference between fact and fiction on the other side, Mr. Speaker.

Now we made sure that government was aware of that motion. We wanted to have the debate. We wanted to get it passed through right away. The government moved an amendment. Now they didn't give us any notice of that amendment — let me be

clear — but I will say that we all supported the amendment that the government introduced.

And we were all able to unanimously — unanimously, everybody; for those who don't know, that means we all agreed — supported that motion and allowed for it to be transmitted to the federal government as our unanimous position. Again that means we all agreed, Mr. Speaker, for the members in the back that seem to have forgotten, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — Too much sarcasm.

Ms. Sarauer: — Yeah. Oh, I've got a lot more sarcasm in me. Trust me. My parents, who are sitting in the gallery, could tell you a few things about how sarcastic I can really get, if you'd like.

Now there are a few things that this government opposite could be doing to provide real relief to Saskatchewan families. Like we said, this government could walk and chew gum at the same time. Now I know the Finance minister does know how to chew gum. I hope she can walk and chew gum at the same time. Call on the federal government to stop their regressive taxes that hurt Saskatchewan families, while at the same time this provincial government could be providing real relief to Saskatchewan families today.

And that's what my colleague, the member for Regina Rosemont, has put forward in his motion that he'll be talking about shortly. And I do hope that members opposite support that motion unanimously. That means we all agree, Mr. Speaker. It's a really good opportunity for this government to provide real relief to Saskatchewan families today, Mr. Speaker.

Like my other colleague, the member for Regina University, mentioned in her speech, families are really struggling today. That is a true fact, Mr. Speaker. Everything has gotten more expensive. Inflation is a real concern for families, whether it's at the fuel pumps, the grocery store, paying your mortgage, paying your utilities. On top of all of that, trying to keep up with kids' sports, any extras, are out the window for a lot of families right now actually, Mr. Speaker.

Now the provincial government has a role to play in the impacts that decisions happen on families' pocketbooks, Mr. Speaker, and a freeze on the gas tax could provide a real impact to families who are struggling to fill their tanks today. It is a reality for a lot of people out there who are having a hard time being able to fill their tanks to even be able to make it to their jobs, to take their kids to school, let alone to take their kids to sports, Mr. Speaker. It's a very reasonable thing that this government could be doing.

So like I said before, while this government loves to point fingers, there are three pointing right back at them. And there's a lot that this government could be doing to help out Saskatchewan families today. So next time this government wants to emphatically point a finger at us, or emphatically point a finger at the federal government, go ahead, but remember there are things that this government could be doing. They're choosing not to do it, Mr. Speaker, every single day, and that's the real tragedy.

The Deputy Speaker: — The 65-minute period has expired. The 10-minute period for the question and answer period will begin.

I recognize the member from Walsh Acres.

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To the member from Cannington: you were in the Assembly on October 30th. Were you not paying attention when every member of the Saskatchewan NDP voted to remove the carbon tax?

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

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would point out that I was there and I voted in favour of the amended motion and it was great. I'm just not sure if members opposite know what the south end of a northbound horse is. They better look it up. It's very close.

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

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government is committed to providing sustainable baseload power for our citizens. However our federal government is one of the only members in the G7 [Group of Seven] advocating for a timeline on shutting down coal production entirely. SaskPower will be required to retire 1,400 megawatts of conventional coal-fired generation by the end of 2029.

To the member from Regina Walsh Acres: do you support the federal government's commitment to end coal production by the end of 2029? And if you do, what is your plan?

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank you for the question from the member opposite. You know, it was the Harper government that brought in the regulations around closing the coal power plants down in Estevan, and the Sask Party government failed to come up with any kind of plan to help that community in navigating that change to the economy. So I would say, I would put back on the government who is in power right now, what is their plan to help the communities in Estevan navigate to lose those coal power plants in due time? Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Can the member for Cannington tell me about a time when he was talking to a constituent of his who told him that they were against the carbon tax but deeply enthusiastic about paying the provincial fuel tax?

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

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our provincial fuel tax dollars, 15 cents a litre, is invested entirely — in fact we double invest that amount of money — back into our highways. We're proud to invest back in the province, unlike the carbon tax that leaves the province.

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

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. While the NDP claim that cutting the provincial gas tax would reduce the cost of living for some of us and some residents, they also have no consideration for how that would work on impacting our roads. To the member from Walsh Acres: does he think that we should go back to the times where his predecessor said that the Saskatchewan people should fill the potholes in their roads?

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

Mr. Clarke: — No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we don't think that we should go back to people filling in the holes. But what we propose, Mr. Speaker, is a break to the gas tax for six months to keep real money in people's pockets in the affordability crisis that they're facing today. Again this is the number one issue we hear on the doorstep across this province that this government doesn't seem willing to take seriously.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question's for the member for Arm River. Does he understand that the Saskatchewan NDP has not and will not support the carbon tax? Or does he need a refresher on the difference between a federal and a provincial caucus?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Arm River.

Mr. Skoropad: — Well I think that it's quite clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the members opposite do support a carbon tax. And just the simple fact that they did an about-face and brought forth a motion that really addressed one thing. They were a little bit upset with the fairness, the fairness with which that carbon tax was being exempted from heating fuel.

They weren't complaining and they weren't upset about the carbon tax, because we had that quote on record, Mr. Speaker. I have the member from Walsh Acres, the Environment critic, saying, "My take on the carbon tax? I am in favour of the carbon tax." Mr. Speaker, the motion said one thing, but certainly their actions leading up to that said something clearly different.

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

Mr. Bonk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member from Regina Douglas Park, I'll speak very slowly, very clearly. I'll use small words if you want. Despite the Liberal and NDP government's every attempt to make life more unaffordable for the citizens of this province, and the fact that your member from Saskatoon Meewasin said that Saskatchewan has some of the lowest utility rates in Canada provided by some of the best utilities that we have in Canada, do you agree with the member from Meewasin that Saskatchewan has some of the most affordable utility rates in Canada?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Douglas

Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — I'm so glad to see that those folks over there finally let that member speak on the record at some point today. Mr. Speaker, yeah, Saskatchewan at one point had the lowest utility rates in Canada, and then that Sask Party jacked them up. That's the problem. The Sask Party loves to jack up the rates of Saskatchewan residents.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Does the member from Arm River believe that we need to get to net zero by 2050 like this government was promoting at PNWER last night? And what is their plan to do so?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Arm River.

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thanks for the question. So we've been on the record. We've stated that we certainly are committed to achieving net zero by 2050. We have a plan. Our plan is laid out — well twofold, really — our plan's laid out in *Prairie Resilience*, so you might want to check that document out. But also our plan is in supporting our most sustainable, most sustainable industries to supply the world with those products, Mr. Speaker.

But let's talk a little bit about their plan. Their plan, quite clearly, is the carbon tax and capping away, reducing, restricting. That's their plan, Mr. Speaker, but certainly that is not the plan on this side of the House.

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

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The NDP continues to have no plan to help Saskatchewan people. While our government stands up to the unaffordable policies supported by the members opposite, they just like to watch life get more difficult as these policies pile up.

SaskPower estimates that under the clean electricity regs, we will have to replace 64 per cent of our electrical grid while expanding it. Their solution? Crickets, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

To the member from Regina Walsh Acres: will you stand up today and tell Saskatchewan people how they should heat their homes if 64 per cent of the grid is shut down?

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And thank you to the member opposite for the question. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is incredible economic opportunity in this province to look to the future of how we can generate electricity in a cleaner way.

Saskatchewan has the best capacity for solar energy across this country. We have the potential for wind energy. We have the potential for nuclear. We have the potential for all sorts of

different opportunities. And so absolutely we need to invest in fixing the electrical grid that this government has neglected for 16 years. This is why, this is why we're in the state that we're in, because of this government.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford: did the member vote against fuel tax relief because they thought people didn't need it, or is it because the Finance minister simply doesn't want to do it?

[12:15]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford . . . The 75-minute debate period has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

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

Motion No. 2 — Suspension of Provincial Fuel Tax

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter in this afternoon to bring forward a motion to call on this Assembly to support the cancellation of the provincial fuel tax both on gas and diesel for a period of six months. And it's a shame, I guess, that we have to push this government in such a significant way to do anything on cost of living, Mr. Speaker.

But I'm happy to bring forward this motion here today, a very common-sense measure that would save families real dollars at a time where families in Saskatchewan really are facing a crushing cost of living, Mr. Speaker, a reality that's an incredible burden for so many families to carry. So many across this province — rural or urban or northern — are carrying this heavy burden. And this is a reality that families know all too well, and it creates enormous stress on the hard-working people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

What's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, is that, worse than doing nothing on this front, we have a provincial government, that Sask Party government, that has made matters worse, that has approached this once-in-a-generation cost-of-living challenge for Saskatchewan families and that has failed to provide relief in any meaningful way, but in fact has piled on with more taxes and more power bill hikes for Saskatchewan people to pay for the mismanagement of this government.

You know, an awful thing as well that we see from this government is that we have a premier and a Sask Party that work to deny the reality that families know all too well across this province, try to paint some sort of rosy picture for the hard-working people of this province, when we know Saskatchewan people are facing a heavy burden on this front.

We know that that burden is felt when they go to the grocery stores, Mr. Speaker. We see that as well through food bank usage that is through the roof, hard-working families that are forced to access food for their families from the food banks. We know that

pressure is felt at the pumps, Mr. Speaker. And of course, this motion here today and the action this government could take today would bring down those costs directly.

And in Saskatchewan, driving is a necessity, Mr. Speaker. Whether you're driving to work or whether you're driving your kids to activities or hockey, whether you're connecting with family or training, or whether you're driving into town, driving is a necessity in Saskatchewan. And when you're facing a buck fifty or a buck sixty or a buck forty a litre at the pumps on top of all of those other costs and the taxes that have been imposed by this government, it puts Saskatchewan people in an incredibly tough situation, Mr. Speaker.

So worse than doing nothing, we have a government that's made things worse. And we have a government that's just so out of touch with the reality of Saskatchewan families on this front, and that works so much to deny the reality that families know.

I represent a lot of folks that are working two and three jobs, Mr. Speaker, just to pay the bills, just to have the utilities paid on time — utilities of course that have been jacked up three times on the power front by this government in the last year during an affordability challenge that's once in a generation, Mr. Speaker — and dealing with all those other costs of this government at the same time of course that they're facing the costs of financing, Mr. Speaker, the costs with their mortgages, Mr. Speaker, as they're facing renewals that are punishing and that are a real stress for Saskatchewan people.

Now the reality is that this government has the fiscal capacity to act. They also have a duty to act on these fronts, Mr. Speaker. But provinces across Canada have acted on these fronts, providing significantly more relief than the province of Saskatchewan.

And Saskatchewan has much greater fiscal capacity on this front because the reality over these last couple years as families have endured this incredible challenge with the cost of living is that this province has enjoyed windfall revenues, Mr. Speaker. Revenues have been at record highs, rolling into their coffers, Mr. Speaker. But it's a different reality of course for Saskatchewan families. It's only fair that this province act and extend some relief to the people of Saskatchewan.

With respect to the fuel tax itself, Mr. Speaker, we see other provinces that have acted on this front. We see a cancellation and reductions in other provinces. We see that next door in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, to the west. We see that to the east in Manitoba. We see that in Ontario. We see that in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. So other provinces have acted on this front, and again Saskatchewan is in the unique situation where we have the fiscal capacity, a surplus, Mr. Speaker, that puts us in a position to provide some relief for Saskatchewan people.

I just want to canvass the record of this out-of-touch government, Mr. Speaker, briefly. This is a government that has made the cost of living worse, that has been punishing to the hard-working people of Saskatchewan, that has brought about the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history, Mr. Speaker, where they stuck the PST on, well pretty much everything, Mr. Speaker.

They've imposed the PST onto insurance and children's clothes,

onto restaurant meals, Mr. Speaker. They've added it onto grocery foods that are used as a staple for Saskatchewan families, Mr. Speaker. They've added this tax, the PST, onto used cars and used trucks, Mr. Speaker. And so many of the people across Saskatchewan that are struggling with the cost of living and working so damn hard just to keep their heads above water, Mr. Speaker, many of them certainly would be buying used cars and trucks across this province, Mr. Speaker.

We see that they've stuck this PST onto recreation, onto rodeos and curling and golf, Mr. Speaker, to Rider games and Agribition which is going to be here next week, Mr. Speaker, those things that give us some pleasure in our lives, Mr. Speaker, that bring us together as communities and that support local businesses.

That's their record, Mr. Speaker, one of hiking costs and hiking taxes despite having the fiscal capacity to go the other way, Mr. Speaker. Now this is one measure today that this government can support and something they could do today that would provide relief for families starting tomorrow by reducing the burden on Saskatchewan families, provide them a little bit of relief as they head into the winter season, into the holiday season, Mr. Speaker.

Of course there needs to be other measures as well to make life more affordable in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, to address the very heavy burden of taxation that this government has stuck Saskatchewan people with, all to pay for the mismanagement of this government that we see on front after front — GTH to the bypass through to overpaid hotel rooms and lavish trips to Dubai, Mr. Speaker, and so much more, IT [information technology] projects that have gone sideways, Mr. Speaker. So Saskatchewan people deserve and need some relief on this front.

The problem with the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, is, you know, they make a lot of noise about say the federal carbon tax. And we do not support that federal carbon tax and will make the case, Mr. Speaker, for Saskatchewan in a heck of a lot more effective way than they have that it doesn't make sense for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we saw it again just in the 75-minute debate just moments before where members get up and grandstand in this Assembly but have had no delivery for the people of Saskatchewan in addressing that carbon tax that's so unfair for this province, Mr. Speaker, so unfair for producers and so unfair for families.

And we'll work on this front to make sure that we have relief and fairness for Saskatchewan with respect to the unfair carbon tax, Mr. Speaker. But Saskatchewan people expect their government to walk and chew gum at the same time, Mr. Speaker. And this is a government that has the ability today — today, Mr. Speaker — not to just make a bunch of noise in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, not to send out hot tweets here today, Mr. Speaker, but to actually cut the gas tax today for the people of Saskatchewan, saving them over \$350, Mr. Speaker, at a time where they're facing such pressures.

We know that Saskatchewan people deserve nothing less. We'll continue to push for affordability in Saskatchewan. We know that in our province we have Saskatchewan people facing enormous pressure, and we see that by way of mortgage arrears that are highest in the country, Mr. Speaker, a reality that's only going to

get worse as people are dealing with the high cost of interest, Mr. Speaker, and as they go to renew or refinance, Mr. Speaker.

And we see it as well where we have by way of any measurement, any polling, any research, Saskatchewan people indicating that they're facing a cost-of-living challenge that's greater than anywhere else in Canada, Mr. Speaker. It's the number one issue facing Saskatchewan people, the number one challenge. And we have a tone-deaf government that's unwilling to act, Mr. Speaker, in a responsible way to provide Saskatchewan people the relief that they deserve.

So I'll put my motion here today, Mr. Speaker. I expect this government to not only support it, then act on it and make sure that Saskatchewan people have the relief they need and deserve. What we hope we don't see, Mr. Speaker, is a government deny that support, a government not act, Mr. Speaker, a government let this motion sit on the order paper and move forward. Ultimately they would vote on it at some point, Mr. Speaker.

What our expectation is on this front, Mr. Speaker — and we reach out in an earnest and honest way on this front — is that this government supports this motion and acts to cancel the tax on gas and diesel for a six-month period of time, saving families hundreds of dollars, Mr. Speaker, at a time that they need relief.

So at this point in time I'll move my motion:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to suspend the collection of the provincial fuel tax from gasoline and diesel for a period of six months in order to help families struggling with the high cost of living.

I so submit.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Regina Rosemont:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to suspend the collection of the provincial fuel tax from gasoline and diesel for a period of six months in order to help families struggling with the high cost of living.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise in and enter into the debate on this motion. And I'd like to thank my colleague, the member for Rosemont, for so clearly laying out why this motion is a very reasonable and pragmatic solution for Saskatchewan families, something that we do hope that the Sask Party government takes seriously and passes and implements expeditiously.

I know I have a lot of other colleagues who are looking forward to entering into the debate on this motion. I am prepared at this stage now to move to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety and Firearms Secretariat.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved that this House do now adjourn. Is that the pleasure of the Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly stands adjourned until Monday afternoon at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:29.]

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