



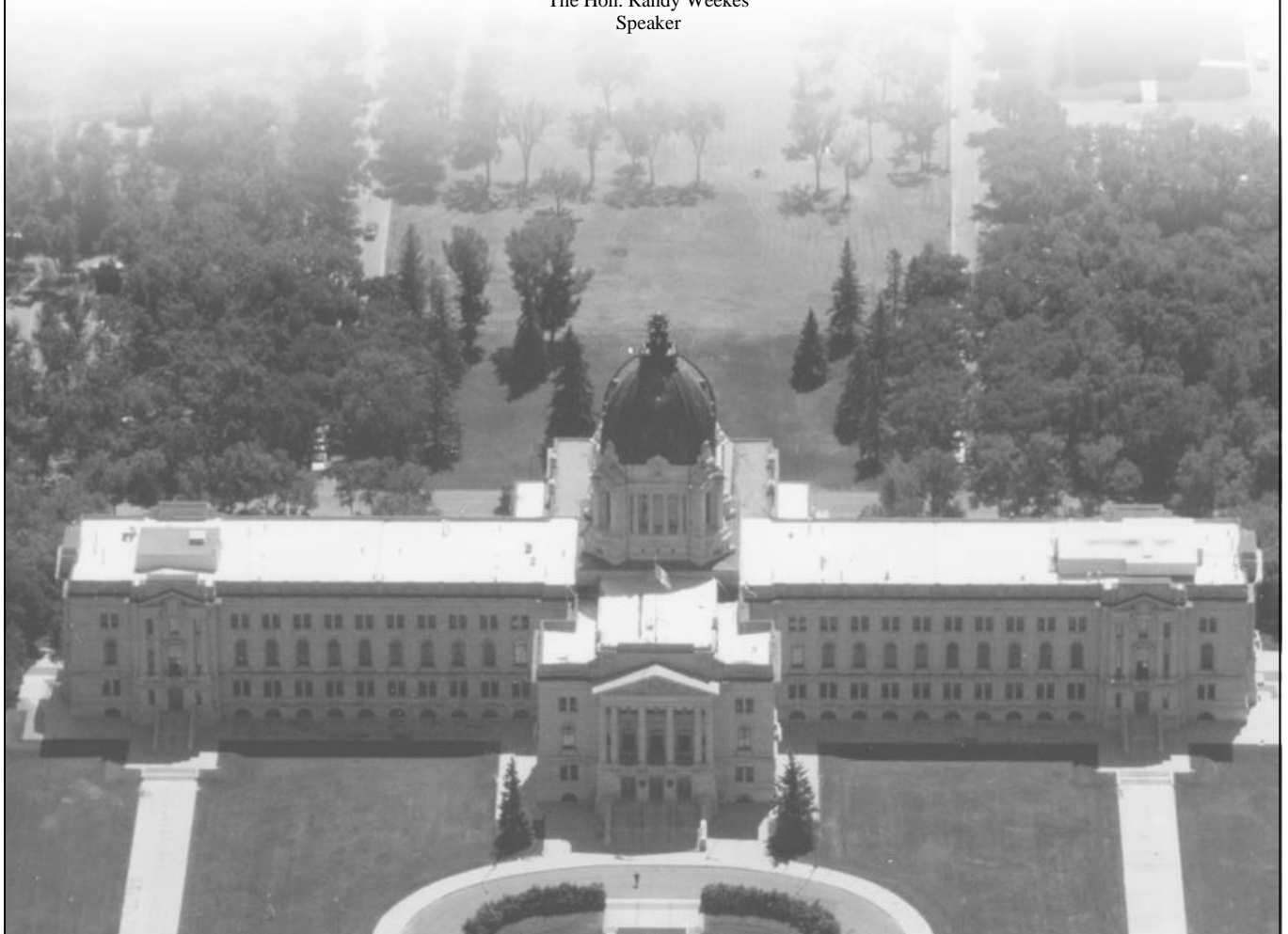
FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly, it is my honour and privilege to introduce two special guests that have joined us in the west gallery, Tim and Bernie Eckel.

Mr. Speaker, Tim began his career at SaskPower in 1982. It's taken him all over the province, starting in North Battleford, places like Spiritwood, La Loche, the Wellington power station on Lake Athabasca, and now Regina for the last number of years, and seemingly everywhere in between. And he's done it all, Mr. Speaker. He's worked on farms, in cities, in the oil fields, on First Nations communities, in northern villages, and with commercial customers large and small.

Mr. Speaker, Tim, who is currently the vice-president of energy transition and asset management, will be retiring from SaskPower at the end of this month.

Mr. Speaker, when you ask people at SaskPower to describe Tim in a word or in a couple of words, which I have done, you hear qualities like intelligent, a good sense of humour, a hard worker, and my favourite, a super good dude. But for me, Mr. Speaker, in having the opportunity to interact with Tim as Minister Responsible for SaskPower, I think of wisdom, humility, and a steadiness that only a minister can appreciate.

So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan and if I can as Minister Responsible for SaskPower, on behalf of the women and men who have worked alongside Tim over the last number of years, thank you to you, Tim, for your outstanding service to this province and to her people, and all the best to you and Bernie in your next chapter. And with that I would ask all members to join with me in thanking and in welcoming Tim and Bernie Eckel to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to join with the minister on behalf

of the official opposition. Mr. Eckel, I only know you through committee, which is an unusual place to get to know people, but as the minister said, your reputation across the corporation is just absolutely sterling.

Not knowing of your retirement, I was having lunch last week with a couple of former SaskPower employees, and your name came up as — just quite naturally — as one of their favourite leaders in the company and just an executive who knew Power inside and out, from top to bottom, east to west, north to south, who modelled just values of commitment, someone who is just passionate about power generation and electrical grid in the province and the critical work that SaskPower does each and every day.

And doing some quick and hopefully not inaccurate math, like 41 years with any organization is just remarkable. That is so rare these days. And while I'm thrilled and I'm sure your family is thrilled for this next chapter of your life and what will hopefully be just an unbelievable adventure retirement, it's also a real loss I think for Power and for the province.

So just happy to join with the minister in congratulating you and thanking you for all of the work that you've done and the legacy and just real appreciation that all employees at SaskPower continue to have and I know will have for you into the future.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I would like to add my appreciation, thanks, and congratulations for a very well-earned retirement.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be remiss if I didn't join in on the congratulations to Tim and Bernie Eckel today. You see, they have known my family, my parents for a very long time. I have known them since I was born. They go way back to STI [Saskatchewan Technical Institute] days. And then my dad worked with him at Power for 35 years. I can tell you if you're anything like my parents — and I know you are — you'll very much love retirement.

Tim and Bernie both have a lot of accomplishments to speak of. They are huge community volunteers. They are very passionate about the work that they both do. And they're also parents to two wonderful children, Jackie and Aaron. And I've also been told to make sure that I make sure the minister's aware that Tim is not just accomplished professionally; he's great at the SaskPower curling bonspiels, the golf tournament. And he's a master gatoring, Mr. Speaker, and if you don't know what that is, then I encourage you to ask him about that later.

Mr. Speaker, these are two wonderful people, very deserving of this thanks and congratulations from the minister. It's always lovely to see them, and I ask all members to join me once again 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 and to all members of the Assembly, it's my honour this morning to introduce two school groups who are seated in the west gallery. Joining us from Moose Jaw today we have 17 grade 12 students from A.E. Peacock. Good morning to them. They are accompanied by their teacher, Carrie Kiefer, Mr. Speaker.

And also in the west gallery, seated behind the students from Peacock, we have 19 grade 7 students from St. Michael School in Moose Jaw. Good morning to them. They are accompanied by their teacher, Ashlee Blais, and I am very much looking forward to meeting with both of these student groups after question period today.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to please join me in welcoming these students and their teachers from Moose Jaw to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce some guests who are seated in your gallery, folks who have made a journey to be here today for an upcoming member's statement that I'll have more to say about that in just a few minutes. But I'd like to introduce to the Assembly David, Janice, Vicki, and Jim Crowell. David and Janice are residents of Saskatoon Eastview, Vicki and Jim in Saskatoon University.

And while I'm limited in time in a member's statement about how much I have to say about David's accomplishments, I'll use an introduction to say a little bit more. He is just an incredible, a legendary educator in our city in his school division, Saskatoon Public Schools. He was recognized in June by Public Schools of Saskatchewan at the Public Section meeting here in Regina — actually presented by the former minister of Education — to his students that he works with at Montgomery Elementary School and the program that they run out of their school called the interStellar program.

It's a STEM [science, technology, engineering, and math]-related program, and what they do is they put together these learning kits that are distributed to schools all across our city. And these learning kits I'm told provide about 15 hours of high-quality, high-engagement, meaningful, instructional learning time for students. They just surpassed sending out over 500 kits that have impacted the learning of thousands and thousands of students in our city.

I want to highlight one project in particular that took place on Halloween of this year. David orchestrated the whole thing. And it was a dry ice program in which they assembled everything that they could ahead of time. But then the day of, they had assembly

lines of people putting together all of the bags and all of the supplies that went out to hundreds of classrooms on the same day so students across Saskatoon could do the same science experiment, experimenting and learning with hands-on learning with dry ice experiments on Halloween. Just incredible.

And all of us should be asking the question: how does one person do it? This isn't the work of one person; it's the work of an entire family. So he enlists his family — his wife, his daughters, and his parents, who are also former and lifelong educators and teachers. And they work together. In fact he jokes that his dad has received the employee of the month award several times, and his mother is waiting to get her first nod as employee of the month in this operation that he's running.

Mr. Speaker, on David's social media, I see throughout the summer months, like many teachers do across our province, he spends his summer months preparing for that magic of learning that happens in our classrooms, in the wood shop, in the science lab, putting things together to impact learning in classrooms. He does this for the love of teaching and a love of learning, like so many of our amazing educators do in this province. And it gives me great joy to welcome David and his family here to their legislature.

I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming David, Janice, Vicki, and Jim to their Legislative Assembly today.

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

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with my colleague, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, in welcoming the students from Moose Jaw. In particular I just want to point out a good friend of mine and colleague, teacher Carrie Kiefer up there.

She is an amazing talent and actually one of her most amazing talents is a hidden talent that not many people know. She's an incredible rapper, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, and you know what? There's a song that she rapped years ago. It still plays in my head and I won't tell you if that's a good or a bad thing, Mr. Speaker, but it still is in there. But I just want to welcome her and the rest of the group to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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.

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.

The petition is signed by residents of Aberdeen and Alvena, Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be on my feet again to present this petition calling on this Assembly for adequate funding for education. Those who have signed this petition would like to bring to our attention that the education funding included in this year's budget is wholly inadequate and is again leading to cuts in the classroom. The SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], who represents 27 public and separate school divisions, have spoken out. Teachers have spoken out.

The fact is that, by this government's own numbers, we know that last year there were 3,840 new students in our province, which is great, but not if the supports and the resources aren't there to support them. At that same time we saw 66 fewer teachers in our classrooms. Over the last decade we've seen a reduction of 80 per cent of teacher-librarians, a reduction in in-school counsellors there to support our students' mental health, and folks are concerned.

I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to provide adequate, sustainable, and predictable operating funds for our 27 public and separate school divisions to ensure that schools, teachers, and other caring professionals are able to meet the needs of every student in Saskatchewan.

Today's petition is signed by residents of Kamsack and Arcola. I do so present.

[10:15]

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

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for the government to address the affordability crisis.

The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that inflation is the highest it has been in more than three decades, that half of the Saskatchewan residents were living paycheque to paycheque before transportation and food costs skyrocketed in 2022, that the Saskatchewan government . . . 32 new tax and fee hikes makes life more expensive, all while harming struggling industries like tourism, culture, and fitness. While other provinces acted, the Sask Party government has ignored the opposition calls for a gas price relief plan.

I will read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition reside in Regina, Saskatchewan. I do so present. Thank you.

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

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

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the official opposition has twice introduced paid sick leave legislation since the onset of the pandemic, calling for a minimum of 10 paid sick days each year and 14 days during a public health crisis. Paid sick leave has been proven to save employers money while making workplaces healthier and safer for all workplaces.

Seventy-one per cent of workers in Canada have experienced workplace violence and/or harassment and, Mr. Speaker, much more needs to be done to ensure that workplaces in Saskatchewan are harassment free.

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing this petition today come from North Battleford and Battleford. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Educator Wins Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight an exceptional Eastview constituent who's joined us here today in your gallery: vice-principal at Montgomery Elementary School, David Crowell.

For nearly three decades, David has passionately shared his love for science and technology and has inspired colleagues across Saskatoon to engage their students in practical, low-cost science

experimentation. He is one of 2023's winners of the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence.

David champions a student-centred approach in science education, emphasizing the importance of empowering future problem-solvers and thinkers. Furthermore David integrates Indigenous perspectives into STEM, bridging cultures through shared knowledge and practices. His dedication to sustainability partnerships and waste reduction has diverted thousands of kilograms of waste from our landfills. One of David's stand-out contributions is the wildly popular interStellar science loaner kit program, providing teachers with materials, tools, and lessons for affordable, hands-on science experiments.

David's long-standing commitment to science education, student empowerment, sustainability, and innovation make him an exceptional teacher, an exceptional leader in his division and in our city, and a deserving recipient of the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. It is my honour to recognize him. I ask all members to join me in congratulating David for his teaching and education accomplishments. Thank you.

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

Impact of Crime on Small Businesses

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The state of crime in Saskatchewan continues to get worse with no signs of it changing any time soon. We now learn this crime epidemic is crushing our small businesses.

A report released this month from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business found that two in five Saskatchewan small businesses have been directly or indirectly impacted by crime. Over a quarter of small businesses say crime is a serious concern. The report states small businesses are struggling to manage theft, property damage, public intoxication, waste litter, and loitering. A shocking 59 per cent are worried about the safety of their customers and employees. The government opposite keeps talking about building and protecting. This certainly is not building and protecting our small businesses.

The latest crime severity index ranks the North Battlefords as the second-worst city for violent crime in Canada. Prince Albert is next, ranking as the third-worst city for violent crime in the nation. Crime in this province has reached a crisis level, affecting our small-business owners, our farms and our rural landowners, our urban centres, and our most vulnerable.

We are now in a crisis that can only be addressed by a change in leadership. Saskatchewan requires a government that will protect our families and communities by restoring law and order. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Couple Advocates for Water Conservation

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand today and recognize Dwight and Carol Lemon. I got to know Dwight and Carol this summer after they contacted my office

about the proposed irrigation expansion plan at the Duncairn reservoir on Reid Lake.

Dwight and Carol built a home, retired to Reid Lake, and reside there all year long. Dwight and Carol are passionate about making sure that the health of Reid Lake is sustained for all users and are advocating for the government to establish a wetland policy to protect it. They have helped form a cabin owners group to advocate for their lake.

Dwight spoke at a media event in front of the legislature in December, organized by the Calling Lakes Ecomuseum, to present to the Premier over 2,200 letters signed by Saskatchewan residents. They're calling on the Water Security Agency to develop a comprehensive water conservation policy. The Premier, by the way, didn't attend.

Carol has started a Facebook group to share information, and Dwight and Carol have joined the many other Saskatchewan residents who understand that water and water quality are very important for health, recreation, and tourism. Thanks to Dwight and Carol for their many, many hours of working to advocate not only for their lake, but for wetlands across Saskatchewan.

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

Resumption of Daily Direct Flights to Minneapolis

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be on my feet to congratulate the Regina Airport Authority and the entire WestJet team on their announcement of a daily direct flight between Regina and Minneapolis beginning in April. Mr. Speaker, with this flight, Regina will be directly connected to a major hub, allowing for easier access to 73 destinations across the United States.

Mr. Speaker, James Bogusz, president and CEO [chief executive officer] of the Regina Airport Authority, said, and I quote:

We haven't stopped working with WestJet, and we are thrilled that they have delivered on this for the community, bringing millions in economic impact and making it easier for the business community and residents to access the United States every day of the year.

I know I speak for this side of the House when I say we are absolutely thrilled too.

Jared Mikoch-Gerke, WestJet director of alliances and airport affairs, had this to say, and I quote, "Our newest investment in Regina will further support the economic growth of the region and unlock businesses and leisure travel opportunities as we accelerate providing affordable travel to our guests."

Mr. Speaker, we couldn't agree more. The only people who don't support this flight are the members opposite. In fact they've said they would end government involvement that made this flight possible.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of our support for Regina and southern Saskatchewan and look forward to this flight creating jobs and opportunities for Saskatchewan people. Thank you, Mr.

Speaker.

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

Federal Court Ruling on Plastics

Mr. Nerlien: — Mr. Speaker, last week we were very pleased to hear that the federal court agreed with Saskatchewan's intervention and ruled that the federal government could not unilaterally declare that all plastic manufactured items were toxic, on par with arsenic, mercury, and asbestos. We agree that the federal government's attempts to do this were clearly overbroad in scope and just another instance of blatant jurisdictional and constitutional overreach.

Plastics is a waste management issue, not a toxic substance issue, and Saskatchewan already regulates waste products responsibly. The federal government has no right to pick and choose which industries it likes and doesn't like. Trying to do that is just economic regulation by another means.

This is about responsible economic stewardship. The federal government said it wanted to reduce 1.6 million tonnes of plastics from the waste stream. The problem is their latest scheme would have added 3.2 million tonnes of other materials from substitutes. Mr. Speaker, that would have created a bigger carbon footprint and it would cost Canadians \$1.95 billion.

Plastic is a crucial material in the health, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors, just to name a few. Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to use any and all tools to assert and protect Saskatchewan's economy, growth, and interests from unnecessary federal intrusion. Thank you.

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

Celebration of Radio Host's Retirement

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1960 Doc and Helen Gormley, from Australia and Ireland, came to The Battlefords via England with a three-year-old in hand. This three-year-old began a radio career in high school with CJNB radio. A career in politics and law soon followed.

On September 9th, 1998 after a series of conversations with prairie entrepreneur Gord Rawlinson, life changed for this individual. *The John Gormley Show* began on 650 CKOM and 980 CJME, covering topics from politics to pop culture. His 25-year Rawlco career encapsulated 6,000 shows, 25,000 guests, and 60,000 callers — everyone from Conspiracy Kevin, Jack from Lumsden, the shame, shame, Shame Lady, and yes, members opposite will know, angry *Gormley* listeners.

John authored two books, one being required reading for all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in Saskatchewan: *Left Out — Saskatchewan's NDP and the Relentless Pursuit of Mediocrity*.

I recently attended a retirement celebration for John. When asked about his legacy he simply said, that is for others to decide. Most important to him though is the familiar Brad Wall phrase, to leave

things better than you found them. On behalf of a grateful Legislative Assembly, you have made your province a better place. Well done, John Kenneth Gormley, well done.

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

Opposition Position on Conflict in the Middle East

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — You know, Mr. Speaker, it is now painfully clear the NDP opposition is supporting anti-Semitism and hate speech. More video of Monday's demonstration has now been posted online with the demonstrators clearly chanting the phrase "From the River to the Sea."

Mr. Speaker, this phrase is widely regarded to be anti-Semitic, and it calls for the complete destruction of the nation of Israel and all the Jewish people who live there. Gustavo Rymberg, CEO of the Hamilton Jewish Federation, recently explained that this phrase "is the mission statement of Hamas, which wants to eliminate all of Israel from the space between the river and the sea. That is why it's anti-Semitic."

In the UK [United Kingdom] a labour MP [Member of Parliament] was recently suspended by his own party for using that phrase at a rally. And in the US [United States] both Democrats and Republicans recently voted to censure a member of Congress for using that phrase. President Biden's press secretary said, "Many find it anti-Semitic, and so obviously we categorically reject applying the term to this conflict."

The use of this phrase was one of the reasons MPP [Member of Provincial Parliament] Sarah Jama was removed from the NDP caucus in Ontario. And the city of Berlin has recently criminalized the use of this phrase as hate speech.

Yet in this legislature, when protesters chanted this virulent anti-Semitic phrase, instead of denouncing it, the NDP member from Saskatoon University liked it on Instagram. Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP member endorsing anti-Semitic hate speech? And why is the NDP leader condoning anti-Semitism in her own caucus?

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Actions of Members and Call for Investigation by Provincial Auditor

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is clearly so desperate to change the channel from what's going on in their own caucus. One week ago today a member of that government caucus was caught in a human trafficking sting. Later this morning this government will be introducing a bill on that very topic.

[10:30]

What message does the Premier think it sends to the women of Saskatchewan that a member of his caucus was caught in a human trafficking investigation?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, within an hour of me finding that information out, that member was removed from the governing caucus. This government provides nearly \$30 million a year to support women. I made very serious comments with respect to what a government should be doing, Mr. Speaker, and later today you will see a bill that will be updating the human trafficking Act in this province.

That's transparency that this government is providing, Mr. Speaker. We would wish and hope that the same transparency would be provided by the Leader of the Opposition. On November 20th, we had the unprecedented act of this legislature being shut down. Government was not able to conduct its business, Mr. Speaker.

Both leaders were out in the rotunda where the Leader of the Opposition indicated that no one from their caucus was involved in organizing, organizing this protest and this shutdown, Mr. Speaker. We've now been informed that on November the 14th, the governing caucus actually hosted the organizers of this group at Tommy Douglas House, Mr. Speaker. Why did the Leader of the Opposition not disclose this to the media?

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, increasingly this tired and out-of-touch government is so desperate to change the channel from the problems in health care, from families facing challenges on the cost of living, and from the never-ending stream of problems coming from their own caucus.

Let's recap, Mr. Speaker. A member of their caucus charged in a human trafficking investigation. Another who owns a hotel where the price was jacked up more than 50 per cent when the public started paying the bill. Yesterday we asked the Premier to call in the auditor. Why won't he do that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — All questions that have been asked and answered on the floor of this legislature throughout the week, Mr. Speaker. What hasn't been answered on the floor of this legislature or in the rotunda was, did the opposition caucus — pardon me, not the governing caucus — the opposition caucus and the Opposition Leader meet with the organizers of that protest on November the 14th hosting them at Tommy Douglas House; why didn't she tell the media; and which caucus members were there?

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, did not even come close to answering the question about the auditor. But this government, this tired and out-of-touch government keeps flailing from crisis to crisis.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford charged with a serious criminal offence. The member from Regina Northeast with jacked-up rates in his hotel, one that received \$172,000 of government funding from Social Services last year alone.

Mr. Speaker, Brad Wall had the courage to call in the auditor to investigate the GTH [Global Transportation Hub]. Why won't

this Premier show some courage and do the same?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — The auditor can investigate any government operations that they so choose, Mr. Speaker. One member will be meeting, to confirm there's no conflict of interest, with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner upon his return from mourning his brother's passing. The other member, no longer a member of the governing caucus.

The question here today is to the Opposition Leader and the opposition caucus members: why did they host the organizers of this week's protest, Mr. Speaker, in a secret meeting, a secret meeting at Tommy Douglas House? Who was at that meeting and what demands were made?

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

Fuel Tax, Affordability, and Actions of Members

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is so distracted by their own pet projects and so distracted by their own caucus in disarray that they have simply, simply lost the plot and failed to focus on the things that matter.

All the time, Mr. Speaker, all the time and energy that this Premier is spending managing his own members' bad behaviour and shoring up his right-wing base on pronouns, that is all time and energy that should be spent focused on the cost-of-living crisis. That's what we're focused on.

We've called for this government to pause the gas tax for six months to provide some relief. Why won't the Premier do that today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I will offer advice. It's free advice, so the Leader of the Opposition can take it for what it is worth. But maybe what the opposition caucus should focus on is being straight with Saskatchewan people, indicating to Saskatchewan people why they held a secret meeting with organizers of the group that shut down the work of government in this legislature in an unprecedented action on November the 14th at Tommy Douglas House; tell Saskatchewan people which members of her caucus attended that meeting, what was discussed, what demands were made, and what they agreed to.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this Premier and that Finance minister are so caught up managing the issues in their caucus that they're mismanaging the top issue facing Saskatchewan people — the crushing cost of living facing families today.

Worse than doing nothing, Mr. Speaker, they've made things worse, piling on with a slew of new taxes and costs. The result? We lead the nation in mortgage arrears, and families are barely getting by. Now is the time for action. Now is the time to offer some relief.

Why won't the Sask Party scrap the fuel tax for six months, as we've called for?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I've answered that question so many times, and the \$2 billion that's in each and every budget that gives relief to Saskatchewan people. He knows full well that Saskatchewan is the most affordable province in which to live. And in fact if a person lived in BC [British Columbia], they would have to pay taxes on 19,300 more dollars of income and have a higher PST [provincial sales tax]. Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, you would have to pay taxes on 19,800 more dollars, and they have a higher PST.

But the question I'm very interested in, quite frankly, because his question's been answered time and time again: was he at the secret meeting?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — As for secret meetings, Mr. Speaker, I can assure no members were at any secret meetings last Thursday at 2 o'clock after the 75-minute debate.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are breaking the bank to fill the tank. They're barely getting by, and this tired and out-of-touch government isn't focused on providing needed relief. They're focused on their own scandals and mismanagement. Public dollars wasted at the Sunrise Motel, on the Premier's pavilion in Dubai, billions more on the bypass and the GTH, and so much more.

There's no end to the money they'll waste on their pet projects, but nothing for families. Why won't the Sask Party scrap the fuel tax and give some relief to families who are facing a crushing cost of living?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, again that question has been answered numerous times in this Assembly, and the tax relief that this government gives residents of Saskatchewan.

But it's interesting, you know, Mr. Speaker, I do find that the member opposite's social media is quite entertaining. And he will post whether he's hunting, time with family. And it has great posts, and he has post whether or not he's in a hospital bed or the groups he works and the functions he goes to.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker, there was absolutely not one post about the secret meeting. Was he there?

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

Provision of Security at Legislative Building

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing Saskatchewan people when it comes to the cost of living, when it comes to democratic principles in the legislature as well. Yesterday we learned that that Sask Party

government is requiring the vetting of all members of the public who wish to access the legislative galleries. But the minister said in the rotunda, "We're not precluding anybody coming into the building," and "this is not about restricting anyone's access."

Let's be very clear, Mr. Speaker. This is the people's building and it belongs to the people of Saskatchewan, not that government.

How does the Minister of Corrections and Policing justify restricting Saskatchewan people from coming here into their own legislature?

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And first off I want to thank all of the members of the legislative district security unit that were here to keep everybody, everybody that's on this floor, that were in the galleries, Mr. Speaker. There are guests here. There were guests here yesterday. We're not impeding anything. We've been very transparent about what we are doing to make sure that people are safe. What isn't transparent is about their secret meeting that they held a week before to make sure . . .

The Speaker: — I need to caution. There's a number, the Premier and Minister of Finance and yourself have been referring to caucus business. You're not to refer to another party's caucus, what they do, at all. So please refrain from doing that. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There was a secret meeting from the opposition caucus that was being . . .

The Speaker: — I ask the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety to withdraw and apologize that comment. I just warned you not to say that. Withdraw and apologize.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw and apologize.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister will actually try to answer one question today, unlike anybody else in that government who's been skirting every single question that the people of Saskatchewan have asked us to ask. And they are doing everything but answer.

Mr. Speaker, if they don't want to answer questions about security in the building, they could have kept it independent. You know who was also great at keeping this building safe? The Sergeant-at-Arms was great at keeping this building safe and he had been doing it independently for decades, Mr. Speaker.

This new policy requires 72 hours of notice with names and addresses provided, and members of the public, those who want to simply show up on the day of proceedings to watch, won't be permitted without approval from the director of the LDSU [legislative district security unit]. Will the minister scrap this directive today and keep the people's House public?

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

[10:45]

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we had guests in here yesterday. There are guests here today. Nobody's been impeded from being able to get into their building. We're very proud of this. This was a policy brought forward by the independent legislative district security unit, Mr. Speaker, that they brought forward. A civil servant with over 20 years of policing experience has brought this forward suggesting that this is what we need to be able to keep the people safe.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very disappointed that the Leader of the Opposition is condoning that what we are doing here is somehow impeding people. Mr. Speaker, there are people here in the building right now. They're welcome to come down to the building and they'll continue to be welcomed in their Legislative Assembly.

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

Transparency Regarding Actions of Members and Call for Investigation by Provincial Auditor

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, it's right there in the directive in black and white. If he doesn't agree with the directive, then he can withdraw it today as the minister responsible. Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government has zero credibility when it comes to protecting our democracy. In fact time and time again, they have taken steps that erodes our democracy.

They also have zero credibility on accountability. Yesterday we asked the Minister of Social Services 10 times if he would call in the independent Provincial Auditor into the matter of the Sunrise Motel, an investigation badly needed when a hotel owned by a Sask Party MLA jacked up the rate more than 50 per cent when the public started picking up the tab.

Later today I'll be bringing a motion. Will the Sask Party government agree to opening the books to the Provincial Auditor? Yes or no?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, as we've gone over several times in this House and answered many questions on this matter, I've directed the ministry to look into the policy and procedures around hotel usage. Mr. Speaker, we're also going to try and get the information the member has asked for as soon as we possibly can. We'll get that out as it becomes available to us.

In terms of the auditor, Mr. Speaker, that independent office can look at any matter, has to do with any ministry. And if they choose to look at any situation, of course, we'd co-operate, and they come up with recommendations in several different areas of the ministry and we do our best to enforce those, Mr. Speaker.

Speaking of transparency, Mr. Speaker, I wonder why the NDP voted against the privilege motion to look into the NDP involvement in the shutdown of the legislature just a few days ago.

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

Ms. Conway: — We voted against it, Mr. Speaker, because we will remain laser focused on the things that matter to Saskatchewan people. And, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people expect basic transparency, basic accountability when it comes to public funds. That is why we have an independent Provincial Auditor, so she can investigate and make sure public dollars aren't being wasted, that we are getting good value for money.

So, Mr. Speaker, it begs the question, what are they hiding? And you know, Mr. Speaker, before I got elected I was a defence lawyer and if they were truly innocent, usually the best defence was just to tell the truth. And you know, the minister before he was elected, he was a professional football player. Doesn't he realize that running interference for a teammate playing dirty is a bad look?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Quite the unfounded accusations from that member, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is the member from Northeast will meet with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner when he returns from dealing with family matters.

I've asked the ministry to look into this situation as to what policies we can do but at the same time keep people safe when they're in vulnerable positions, particularly as we come into the winter, Mr. Speaker. We'll work to get that information as soon as possible out, and that member can obviously take a look at it and use the mechanisms within this Chamber to scrutinize that situation.

But what I'd like to know as well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of transparency and letting people know, does the NDP leader agree with her member that Israel is guilty of genocide?

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, we have always known on this side that as the Sask Party scandals rack up, as they falter more and more, as they limp from crisis to crisis they would get desperate, they would get nasty, and that is what you see on full display today.

So again to the Minister of Finance, to the Premier, to the Sask Party cabinet, to the Ministry of Social Services: will he allow the independent Office of the Provincial Auditor to open up those books?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — As I said before, the ministry is going to look into policies and procedures. The auditor can look into any matter that they so wish, Mr. Speaker, and we would co-operate with that at any time. We have in the past on many different matters within the ministry, Mr. Speaker.

But it's interesting the member opposite admitted they don't have

transparency. What are they trying to hide by not having their members appear before a potential privilege process right here at the legislature for what happened? They voted against it, Mr. Speaker.

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

Crime Rates and Policing Services

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been pressing this government for weeks now about the crime rate in our province. I ask them again: how could they let the crime get to the epidemic levels that we are seeing? How could they? It's completely out of control, and I have yet to hear an explanation from them.

The crime statistics coming out of the city of Prince Albert are shocking and unacceptable. According to the Prince Albert Police, violent crime for the city increased by 56 per cent in one year, from '21 to '22. Assaults increased by 70 per cent. Robbery increased by 63 per cent. Break and enters are up 56 per cent. These increases are in just one year. We are seeing similar dramatic jumps in crime all over the province, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the government: is this the kind of growth that is supposed to be working for everyone, or is this what the government thinks building and protecting is?

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very proud of the actions that this government has taken to make sure that we are keeping our communities safe. That's including the marshals services and all of our crime reduction teams which . . . The marshals service will be based out of Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to be able to put on the record for this is that member over there sat in our caucus for 12 years with me, never heard a word about this. Never heard a word about any of this. Never even spoke up on an issue. Now all of a sudden she seems to find her voice. She had various positions within our government, sitting on committees. Never heard a word about this, Mr. Speaker, but wow does she . . . be able to find her feet when somebody's writing her speeches for her. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well they wouldn't address the crime rate when their constituents were struggling, but now that they are being pushed by the Saskatchewan United Party, they decided they will do something.

Mr. Speaker, I'm constantly being contacted by residents across the province about vehicle theft. In Prince Albert motor vehicle theft increased by 25 per cent last year and is on track to increase by another 20 per cent this year. The per capita vehicle theft rate of Prince Albert is four times higher than Toronto and 3.5 times higher than Saskatoon. It's even higher per capita than the

highest-ranked city for vehicle theft in the USA [United States of America], Mr. Speaker, Bakersfield, California.

Can this government give any explanation for their catastrophic failure to protect our Saskatchewan citizens?

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again I'll remind the member of what we've done as government with our crime reduction teams that have been very effective. Our warrant intelligence team, Mr. Speaker, our teams that we have been putting into hot-spot areas to make sure that crime is suppressed. We're working with local municipality police. We're developing the marshals service. We're very close on announcing our chief marshal on this to be able to address the issues that that member is bringing forward specifically.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to making our community safe. That's why we've been working with Social Services, with Health, with our local municipalities, with our First Nations policing to make sure that all communities are safe for everybody in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Closure of Tire Recycling Facilities

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Shercom Industries has just announced it'll be permanently closing all its facilities in the province. After we pressured the government in May about their failure in tire processing, they assured us that Shercom-Tire Stewardship situation would be handled. The Premier himself gave assurances, and yet now we are learning that this government did not handle the situation. It has spiralled out of control. Saskatchewan is now losing its only value-added scrap tire processor in the province.

This falls directly on the Premier and his government. How can he build or protect anything in this province when he loses a made-in-Saskatchewan success story business, a business now closing permanently as a result of this government's mismanagement of its agencies while importing foreign operations? Mr. Speaker, what does the Premier have to say for this complete failure of his government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're indeed disappointed to learn, only through the media, that Shercom and Tire Stewardship of Saskatchewan could not reach an agreement for the northern processor in the province.

Tire Stewardship of Saskatchewan is committed to implementing several actions with the report done with Cam Swan, with an aim to improve tire recycling in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Swan was also engaged to help in the implementation of this action plan.

The ministry and Mr. Swan closely monitored negotiations as well but had no direct role in said negotiation, and Tire

Stewardship of Saskatchewan is not a government agency. Any questions regarding the negotiations should be directed to the board of Tire Stewardship of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Crime Rates and Policing Services

Ms. Wilson: — The epidemic of crime has got so bad, the residents of Tisdale are looking at how they can take matters into their own hands to protect their community. Last night we attended the community watch meeting in Tisdale, which focused on introducing a citizens on patrol program similar to what the town of Nipawin had to do. Over 250 residents were in attendance. They are frustrated and out of options.

Tisdale finds itself with an understaffed RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] detachment and a closed courthouse and jail thanks to this government. As a result, the officers in Tisdale had to make a three-hour round trip to Melfort just to book one suspect.

Can the government explain why our rural communities have understaffed RCMP detachments and closed jails and closed courthouses while we're experiencing an unprecedented crime epidemic?

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've been able to work with our municipal police forces as well as the RCMP, again to make sure the communities are safe in our province.

Mr. Speaker, if there is an issue in a specific area of the province, it's the municipality or the RCMP's job to be able to contact us and we will be able to provide supports. We've been doing this throughout the province to be able to suppress crime in specific areas. And the feedback that we've heard from municipalities is they are thanking us for this service, to be able to have this so they can feel safe in their communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — State your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During question period, there'd be a number of points of order that could be raised with regard to the questions from the member for Elphinstone, but I will keep it to only one. That member has demonstrated her continued respect for the institution repeatedly. This is another example of it, Mr. Speaker.

Rule 47(2) has some very clear provisions with regard to remarks in question period. I would point to just one of her quotes: "running interference for a teammate playing dirty." Clearly a

contravention of 47(2), Mr. Speaker. And I would ask you to make the appropriate ruling.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw and apologize.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 152 — *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act, 2023*

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

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 152, *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act, 2023* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 152 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Why is the member on her feet?

MOTION UNDER RULE 61

Call for Investigation by Provincial Auditor

Ms. Conway: — To seek leave to move a motion under rule 61, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Will the member briefly state the purpose of the motion and read the text of the motion?

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an important motion I hope we can all unite behind, to look at how this government is managing public funds in the Ministry of Social Services through spending on hotels. It asks the Provincial Auditor to conduct a special investigation. If granted leave, I would move the following motion:

That the Assembly pursuant to subsection 16(1) of *The Provincial Auditor Act* request that the Provincial Auditor perform a special assignment investigation to examine the Ministry of Social Services' policies, expenditures, and procedures regarding the management of public funds

through the payment of hotel fees for clients and those in the care of the ministry.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has requested leave to move without notice a motion of urgent and pressing necessity under rule 61. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Yes.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Leave is not granted. Next order of business.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Significance of Bill No. 137

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today to move a motion of debate on this floor of this Chamber calling upon the government to repeal Bill 137.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 137 is a dangerous, exclusionary piece of legislation that will cause harm to children of our province. This legislation forces teachers to out queer and trans youth under the age of 16 to their parents if they want to use a different name or pronoun in the classroom. Mr. Speaker, the rationale the government put forth was that this legislation would bring parents and children closer together.

[11:00]

We know that this is not true, as the government shamefully voted no to our do-no-harm amendment and shamefully voted no to the creation of a parent advisory panel, which I will speak to later.

Mr. Speaker, our party has been opposed to this legislation from the start. While we will never come between a parent and their child, we will never out trans kids. And we will always stand up for the most vulnerable, especially when they are being treated as political pawns by a government and political party so desperate to keep their extremists and far-right voter base from fleeing to bluer pastures.

Mr. Speaker, I will say it again. We will never out trans kids. That's exactly what this legislation will do. This legislation will ultimately put queer and trans youth at greater risk of domestic violence and homelessness and will create classroom environments of distrust between students and their teachers, effectively creating "don't ask, don't tell" classrooms.

Statistics show that even without legislation that targets them, queer and trans youth are already at higher risk of being kicked out by their family, higher risk of running away from home when their parents are unaccepting, higher risk of being subjected to domestic violence, and at higher risk of self-harm and suicide when their identities are not validated. This policy will only make these issues worse and will have detrimental effects on children.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 137 also seeks to ban all third-party sexual health education providers in the classroom, another worrying decision by a government that recently invited a convicted wife murderer to a Throne Speech and has seen one of their caucus members arrested in a human trafficking sting operation. All this in the province with the highest rates of domestic violence.

This is a very white, very male, tired, and out-of-touch government caucus that continues to show their true colours, continues to show they have little ground to stand on when it comes to protecting women, and continues to oversee the worst-in-the-country record on women's issues. Banning third-party sexual health providers will only perpetuate the worsening of these outcomes through a total lack of education on these important topics.

Mr. Speaker, not only has the official opposition been opposed to this policy and subsequent legislation from the start, we've also seen opposition and rebuke from trusted figures and leaders in our community. Early on the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate came out swinging against this exclusionary policy and dangerous bill. And in a court case seeking an injunction, a justice said that this policy would cause irreparable harm. It needed to be paused. My colleague from Saskatoon Eastview canvassed these leaders' reports thoroughly in his responses.

Bill 137 has also been opposed by many organizations and groups that were simply not consulted in the development of the legislation. Parents, students, trans and queer experts and advocates, sexual health organizations, and community-based organizations have all raised alarm bells. None were consulted. Had they, they would have told this government to scrap these plans.

Worse yet, the government could not point to one single parent that would come forward to say they were surprised by their child taking a different name or pronoun. While the Education minister's numbers have varied from hundreds to tens of thousands, no one could be pointed to. The Premier and Minister of Health corroborated as such in the media, not hearing from a single parent, not being able to point to a single parent.

No consultation was done on the development of this legislation. Being questioned on consultation, the Minister of Education could point to not one organization that he reached out to. Could not point to one single parent. Instead the Minister of Education showed up to the ministry one day with a Memories-scrawled napkin and put in place a policy that will forever tarnish this government's record.

In stark contrast, my office received hundreds of letters from concerned citizens in Saskatchewan from parents, from leaders in the community, from faith leaders, from queer and trans individuals — from queer and trans youth themselves — demanding that this government scrap this dangerous exclusionary policy.

Many of these letters were read on the floor, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the floor of this legislature, while this government sat with their earbuds in, played Candy Crush, watched Netflix or sports, listened to music so loud that I could hear it on this side of the House. Members of the legislature with LGBTQ+ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, plus] family

members shamefully excused themselves from this debate and voted in favour of this legislation. I hope that these members have had difficult conversations with their loved ones or their LGBTQ+ staff that work for them in this building.

And if it wasn't bad enough that they didn't consult, they didn't listen to families. They didn't listen to queer and trans people. They decided they needed to accomplish this with the first emergency session in 25 years. While Saskatchewan people face the highest rates of mortgage arrears in the country during a general cost-of-living crisis, our health care providers crushed under a system in collapse, an education system being starved of resources, or an economy that is second-last in the country, the Saskatchewan Party government called an emergency debate on pronouns.

Knowing this bill would not hold up in court, or the court of public opinion, they limited petitions, limited introduction of guests, and extended hours of the legislature to ram through this bill. Talk about a disruption of democracy, Mr. Speaker. That these members even have the gall to bring forward motions about disruption of democracy is a slap in the face to every single person in this province and our democracy.

This government has no moral ground, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to stand on when they make claims of disruptions of democracy. They changed the rules of this House, this House of democracy, for their own political machinations, all to ram through a bill including the notwithstanding clause to roll back the human rights of children, specifically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, queer and trans children.

They have absolutely no moral ground when it comes to talking about extremists, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as this bill was designed to hedge the bleed of far-right extremists — anti-trans, anti-queer voters — in their own shaky coalition. They used the notwithstanding clause to attack vulnerable minorities in an attempt to keep them in the tent. Shameful, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And that brings me to the notwithstanding clause, yet another slap in the face of our democracy. They used the rarely used notwithstanding clause to ensure no court could challenge their hateful, exclusionary legislation. Mr. Speaker, they used the notwithstanding clause because they knew this legislation was in direct contravention of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*.

It's unnerving to know that a government that would bring forward human rights could only take them away just a matter of years later. I need not remind this House that it was this Saskatchewan Party government that added gender and gender identity to *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* in 2014, but the member of Saskatoon Northwest, then minister of Justice saying:

The code is there to protect Saskatchewan people from discrimination and promote equity. These changes will expand the protections that already exist for members of the lesbian, gay, and transgender community in this province.

Such a shame, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Times have surely changed for the Saskatchewan Party government. They now passed legislation in direct contravention to the human rights they

brought forward in 2014. It is unbelievable, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, they also knew that this policy was in direct contravention of the UN [United Nations] agreement of which Canada and Saskatchewan are signatories on, the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Canada signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on December 13th, 1991. The legislation now puts Saskatchewan in direct contravention of this agreement, another shameful legacy that this Saskatchewan Party government will wear.

Mr. Speaker, what is so serious here is that we're talking about the human rights of children. The government has actively rolled back the human rights of children with Bill 137, but not just any children, Mr. Deputy Speaker, specifically the human rights of queer- and trans-identifying children.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education's loathe to acknowledge this though. When asked in question period, he continues to parrot talking points that this is an inclusionary policy. In fact he won't even say the word "queer" or "trans." This policy could not be farther from inclusionary, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It specifically targets queer and trans children in our school system, a group that represents less than 1 per cent of all children in our schools.

Statistically not even every school in our province might have a child that identifies as trans. The government recalled the legislature for the first time in 25 years to attack 1 per cent of the population. I think that should sink in for a second for everybody watching at home and every single member in this House.

How do I know that this isn't an inclusionary policy? Because no other students will be affected. Only the queer and trans kids looking to use a different gendered name or different pronoun in their classroom.

This legislation specifically targets this group, a marginalized, vulnerable minority within a minority that is being targeted by the Minister of Education and the Premier for political gains, to sow division. The Saskatchewan Party government has wholesale rolled back the human rights of children, and we are gravely concerned about who they will target next.

I think that the people of Saskatchewan have grave concerns about who they will target next. We had organizations like the Canadian Bar Association say those very words. How could this government use the notwithstanding clause to roll back human rights? It's unfathomable.

On mental health, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that this policy will lead to worse mental health outcomes for those students. When asked about additional supports that we put in place for these vulnerable students already at higher risk of self-harm and suicide, the minister says there are ample supports for queer and trans students.

Ample supports, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That was the answer to my questions on additional mental health supports because we know that the current regime, the current mental health supports that are in place are not working.

Parents of gender-diverse children who've been lost to suicide,

parents who've done absolutely everything in their tool box to help their children have come to this legislature begging this government for more supports to be put in place, begging this government for this dangerous policy to be scrapped so that no other families in Saskatchewan have to deal with the loss of a child.

It's incomprehensible, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are even standing in this Chamber right now when issues like the cost of living, health care, the mental health care crisis are out there and we are debating whether we should be rolling back the human rights of children that this government has put in place. We demand more support for children experiencing mental health crises, specifically supporting queer and trans youth who will be affected by this discriminatory policy.

Mr. Speaker, the government claims this legislation was about bringing parents and children closer together, but we know that that's not the case. Otherwise they would have voted in favour of our two amendments.

The first amendment, in an effort to create real, lasting, concrete connections between parents and students, was the creation of a parent advisory council. Not a new concept. In fact they have one in Alberta. This amendment was voted down.

The second amendment we proposed was a do-no-harm clause. We know that not every child has a safe and accepting home. In this amendment we proposed that any student, upon receiving support from mental health care providers as the legislation said, if they could show real concern that their well-being would be affected, that we could waive the parental consent. Sadly this Saskatchewan Party government voted down our do-no-harm amendment.

Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely shocking. This government had absolutely no intention through this legislation of actually bringing parents and children together. This is a discriminatory policy. It's discriminatory legislation. It will cause irreparable harm to children in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, given that this government caucus was mostly silent for 40 hours of debate on the floor to Bill 137, I am very happy to see some of them find their feet. With that, I move the motion:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to repeal Bill 137.

I do so move.

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

That this Assembly calls upon the government to repeal Bill 137.

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

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's been a lot of discussion about this particular issue on the floor of this Assembly, as the member opposite referred to, a substantial

amount of debate that's taken place in regards to this issue. And certainly I'm happy to be a part of the debate here today.

[11:15]

Education, Mr. Speaker, education, working with young people is certainly something that is near and is very dear to my own heart. And actually just a couple of days ago I had the good opportunity to spend some time and actually introduce a school group and spend some time with those young people. It was a grade 4 and 5 class from Raymore School and that certainly was a pleasure. We got to spend time after question period and we got to . . . they got to ask me some questions and I got to ask them some questions too. And it truly was a wonderful opportunity. It certainly is one of those things that fills my bucket, spending time with young people.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before getting into politics I spent over 20 wonderful years in education, in that education sector, actually in a number of different capacities, Mr. Speaker.

I began my career in high school. I was a high school teacher, and I did that for a number of years and then I moved on. I certainly don't say upward, but I certainly moved on to be a career development consultant for a number of years. Seven years as a matter of fact, being a career development consultant. Then I had an opportunity to be an administrator, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I was an administrator at an elementary school, which was a little terrifying for me seeing as I'm a high school guy by trade. But it was absolutely three of the best years of my life. And I was an administrator in high school. I also worked for the public school division, public school system, and I also worked most recently in the separate school system.

So maybe what we're saying here is I can't hold down a job here. I hear the members opposite saying something. Maybe they're commenting on that. But I certainly like to think that I have some breadth of understanding, and I think I have some experience that I can bring to this topic here today. I absolutely loved my time, and it certainly has been an honour to work with and to serve parents and children over the course of those years.

Throughout my career, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I certainly have seen many changes. I've seen changes in technology. I started, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was one of the overhead projector guys — overhead projectors, VHS [Video Home System] tapes, floppy disks, moved to Smart Boards and Promethean boards, then Chromebooks, some Netflix maybe, iPads.

In changes I've also seen in assessment, in grading practices, in best practice, triangulation of assessment. I've also seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a number of changes in instructional practice over those 20-plus years in education.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I would like to say is this . . .

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

Ms. Sarauer: — The motion that we're debating today is very narrow and very clear. I'd ask that the member opposite stick to the clear parameters of the motion, not about technology, but about Bill 137.

The Deputy Speaker: — It's quite . . . I believe that the member, being a former school teacher, is bringing forward what is going to be happening.

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for that. And if the member opposite just waited one more second, I was going to say, but the one theme, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that did not waver over the course of my educational experience, the one theme that did not waver was the importance of involving parents in the lives of their children, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As a career development consultant I've set up individualized career counselling sessions with every grade 11 and 12 student in the schools that I represented, with the students but also with their parents and guardians. Sometimes I would be a part of starting a career conversation that hadn't begun in their home. And sometimes, Mr. Speaker, I would be just a part of an ongoing conversation that had certainly already been well under way in their homes.

As an educator and as an administrator we worked hard. We worked hard and continue to work hard, and it still happens today, to inform and engage and involve parents. Apps like Remind 101; platforms like Edsby and Google Classroom; social media; engaging nights like arts nights, math nights, author nights — loved those author nights — student-led conferences, parent-teacher interviews, surveys like OURSCHOOL survey or Tell Them From Me survey, open houses, phone calls, emails, bulletins, newsletters. I could go on. I could go on, but I want to make a point here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Why, why do we do all that? Because parental involvement and support are key to young people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, parents are the most important people in a child's life and need to know what goes on and is being taught in their children's school. Parents need to be continued to be involved in all aspects of their children's lives between the opening bell and the dismissal bell. Further, parents, Mr. Deputy Speaker, parents should always be involved in the important decisions involving their children.

The matter of this debate, the Parents' Bill of Rights legislation, Mr. Speaker, is a piece of legislation that enshrines our belief that it is in the best interests of children when parents are involved in their education, in their classrooms, and in the important decisions in their life. This piece of legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, provides clarity to schools and school divisions, and protecting the important role that parents and guardians have in supporting their children regardless where they call home in this province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Parents' Bill of Rights outlines several different rights that parents have regarding their children's education. I'll just touch on a few here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, such as they have the right to act as a primary decision maker with respect to pupil's education, to be informed on a regular basis regarding the child's attendance and behaviour and academic achievement. They have access, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the child's school file. They also have the right to be informed of any disciplinary action and investigation taking place at the school, to inform or be consulted regarding attendance issues or regarding any learning classes that are going to be undertaken in the school for that child.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is our firm belief that the most important people or person in a child's life is a parent. And with that belief, it only makes sense that the parent and the parents are to be involved in important decisions in a child's life. It is already accepted . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay, I'm getting a little tired of this. I can't hear what the member is saying, so would you please quieten down.

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was having a hard time hearing myself as well.

It's already accepted that parents need to be involved in consenting for a wide variety of things such as field trips, medication, extracurricular activities and the like, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it stands that parents should also be involved in important decisions outlined in this piece of legislation.

This legislation supports parental inclusion. The default position of schools should be to include parents in their children's lives, not to exclude them. That is, to support families to walk together as a child develops as a student; to walk together, Mr. Deputy Speaker, along a career journey as a child discovers their passions; and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to walk together as they develop as a person. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a dubious honour to be on my feet and enter into debate on this important motion presented by the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, and also to follow on the words of that last member.

So you know, it's interesting. We just heard from a former high school teacher and educational consultant and administrator as he has self-described himself. And you know, it's rather disturbing the way that this bill has been framed as something that is protecting the rights of parents, without any acknowledgement whatsoever of the rights of children — and in particular, vulnerable children who are at risk of irreparable harm and being in unsafe circumstances.

It is not under debate within this Assembly that we want to have parents involved in their children's lives. That is not what is up for debate, and it's not why this motion to repeal the Act has been brought forward. This motion addresses the rights and the safety of vulnerable children. And so to make a false equivalency and say that, you know, we want to have parents involved in all aspects of their children's lives — from career planning to, I suppose, truancy and other things — like yes, of course. Of course.

But you know, there are children who are in home situations that put them at risk if they come out before they are ready. I listened with great interest to the former minister of Education talk about how "we don't keep secrets in our house." And while, I mean, I applaud that notion of having an open and trusting home environment, that is not the case for every family.

And as a parent of four children and was very actively involved in their upbringing and involved in the lives of their friends, I can

tell you most assuredly that not all children come from safe, supportive, trusting home environments free of violence, free of intergenerational trauma and other factors, that even though parents love their children and want to do their best for them, sometimes do not have the capacity or the tools or even the, you know, openness to deal with a situation of a child who is struggling with their sexual identity, is questioning their identity, knows their identity. They know who it is safe to come out to and who it is not.

And from my own experience . . . The former minister of Education spoke of his experience. The last member just spoke of his as a high school teacher. I've heard him say before that he's also a parent, and I too. Many of us in this Assembly are parents, and we want what's best for our children.

But we can't let our own personal experience blind us to the reality of every child in Saskatchewan and the cases where those trusting home environments do not exist and where often it is the teachers, the school administrators, the educators who provide that safe environment for them to test out their identity, ask the questions, and decide for themselves when they are ready to come out of the closet, when they are ready to share their identity with the kids in their class, their teachers, and also their parents.

[11:30]

You can't force, you cannot force an individual into a path of expressing their identity if they're not ready, and particularly not in situations that are unsafe for them to do so, pushing them into the closet. There is evidence, scientific evidence that demonstrates that LGBTQ+ children are at greater risk of harm, suicide ideation when they don't feel accepted and supported. And to thrust children into a situation where they feel unsafe will, as the judge indicated, potentially put them into a situation of irreparable harm.

And I think it's unconscionable, absolutely unconscionable that this government would use this piece of legislation as a form of political pandering to shore up their far-right base, as a way to, you know, have their electoral prospects strengthened while diminishing that of vulnerable children, children at risk, children who are already, you know, young and they're facing an uncertain world. And it's just the most base, base form of politics.

And I would say that as a parent, you know, I bring that perspective of understanding cases where it's not always safe for children. I've had children, you know, friends of my children come to me and share their challenges in their home environment. It's not always a safe environment. You can't make it so by legislating it as such.

And we know that this was truly a disingenuous attempt by this government, I mean, to ram through a legislation, absolutely zero consultation, lots of hand waving about, oh we talked to people in grocery stores and the like. But I mean that doesn't constitute consultation. What about the school boards? What about those elected trustees? Not even consulted. I mean to me that seems so obvious. That would've been the starting point for a discussion around such a proposed bill. I mean what else are they elected for than to enter into a conversation as vital as this? And they were completely ignored, completely ignored.

We know also that this bill is causing other harms by removing the ability of third parties to provide education in classrooms about consent and boundaries. And it's absolutely shocking that the latest StatsCan report shows that we have the worst levels of intimate partner violence, double the national average, here in Saskatchewan. And this bill does nothing to address that shameful and shocking reality.

Police-reported cases of assault were 732 per 100,000 people, the highest in the country. And if that wasn't bad enough, 292 people have been wait-listed from accessing counselling service here in Saskatchewan, and average wait times in the North are three to six months. We have the worst rates of intimate partner violence. We have the longest wait times to seek access.

And Bill 137 does nothing to address those deplorable rates and that terrible situation. It is, as the member for Saskatoon Meewasin has already said, a dangerous and exclusionary bill. It will not bring parents and children closer together. It was an unserious piece of legislation by an unserious government only interested in providing distraction and running away from their failures and the cost-of-living crisis and in health care, mental health, and addictions.

And it makes me sad. It honestly makes me incredibly sad, and I support the member's motion.

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

Mr. B. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is indeed an honour to stand in this Chamber, this hallowed Chamber today, to bring this message through you and to you to members opposite.

This, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is me speaking as a parent, as a grandparent, as a former Chair of the local school board, a parent of three children who went through the education system, and now 10 grandchildren, half of them who are already in education as we speak. And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government totally recognizes the importance of ensuring that the rights of Saskatchewan parents are protected.

And this is why Bill 137, *The Education (Parents' Bill of Rights) Amendment Act* of 2023 was passed utilizing all legislative tools available to the government. And why was this done, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government recognizes the important role that parents and guardians have in protecting and supporting their children as they grow and develop.

Our government simply does not accept that it is in the best interests of children to hide information from their parents. That certainly didn't work for me. After hearing from parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles from all across my constituency on this summer's campaign, I know first-hand that this bill has strong support from the majority of Saskatchewan residents.

That is why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government moved to remove the contents of this bill as government policy and replaced it in enshrined legislation. Our government wholeheartedly believes that it is in the best interest of children when parents are involved in their education, in their classrooms,

and in all important decisions in their lives. Success, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in our children's lives requires involved and engaged parents. This bill ensures that can and will happen.

This bill provides clarity and certainty regarding the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. The former education Act of 1995 was silent on these issues and that resulted in limited parental rights, responsibilities, and decision making on key issues surrounding the education of their children. We know that parents and guardians have an important role to play in supporting and protecting their children. Children working through significant questions and issues relating to gender identity need support, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and parents and guardians must, must be involved in these discussions and decisions.

We also know that education is a shared responsibility between parents, guardians, children, school divisions, the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Corporation, Conseil des écoles — as I know I've murdered that phrase — and government. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill demonstrates our government's commitment to ensuring that parents' and guardians' rights must be included in their child's education and they are enshrined in law. This bill reflects feedback and concerns our government has received from parents and Saskatchewan residents regarding the sexual health content being presented to their children. And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill makes it very clear that parents or guardians of a pupil have the right to act as the primary decision maker with respect to their child's education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's take a moment to remind ourselves of what is contained in this bill, Bill 137, *The Education (Parents' Bill of Rights) Amendment Act, 2023*. First of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, parents must be provided with at least two weeks' notice prior to sexual health content being presented to their child, including the subject matter and dates. It includes the right to withdraw their child from the presentation without demerit or penalty. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, parents must provide consent for their child, if under the age of 16, to use a different gendered name and identity prior to its use by school staff.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in section 197.4 of Bill 137 it outlines the legislative framework for consent from a parent or guardian that is required for a student under the age of 16 to use an alternative gendered name and identity and have it used by school staff in a school setting. Importantly for me as a parent, as a grandparent, and knowing that this is a significant concern, this section adds protections that if the child may suffer physical, emotional, or mental harm by obtaining consent from the parent, the principal will engage the appropriate school resources to support and assist the child in developing a plan for that child to address the request with their parents or guardians.

And as I stated previously, our government knows that parents and guardians have an important role to play in supporting and protecting their children. This bill, the parental bill of rights, protects the fundamental rights of parents and guardians and enshrines that they are the primary decision maker, the primary decision maker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with respect to their children's education.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude my comments with a quote from a man with a visionary mind, who anticipated the need for

this legislation that we are discussing here today. And I quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

So it is entirely likely that the rights set out in the Charter will come into conflict with other equally important rights, which are the responsibility of the legislative and executive arms of government to protect.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that quote is from the Hon. Allan Blakeney, the 10th premier of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, with the passing of Bill 137, *The Education (Parents' Bill of Rights) Amendment Act, 2023*, our government exercised that responsibility and used the notwithstanding clause in exactly the way the late Premier Blakeney envisioned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite's so supportive of the bill, he left two minutes of perfect time on the clock where he could have continued to talk about how much he supported this bill. And he could have continued to educate us on the intricacies and the history of the notwithstanding clause. I'm very sad that I couldn't have heard more of that speech from the member opposite, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen a lot of performative displays this week from members opposite, and one of them in particular that I want to talk about today is around the importance of democracy. And all of a sudden we have a government that's very concerned about democracy and protecting democracy and the importance of this legislature and what happens inside of this legislature.

But during Bill 137, what did this government do to pass Bill 137? Well they changed the rules of this legislature. They stifled democracy to ram it right through, Mr. Speaker. They didn't have to do that. I said this before, a month and a half ago. I'll happily explain it to them again. They did not have to change the rules of the legislature to ram through their bill that they wanted to.

And they also didn't have to call a special sitting to ram through this bill, Mr. Speaker. Like we said before, typically historically when special sittings are called it's in the event of some sort of economic crisis. Perhaps there's a war that's going on. The only crisis that was going on, Mr. Speaker, at that time was the one within their own caucus, and that's why we had a special sitting in October, Mr. Speaker.

[11:45]

When that happened with this caucus, Mr. Speaker, they had no problem throwing the rules of democracy right out the window. It benefited them at that time, Mr. Speaker. So it's very hard for myself and members opposite to take this display of expressing the importance of democracy seriously when we have fairly good memories over here. I've talked about this before around some of the motions that have been passed unanimously around this House and how members opposite are a bit forgetful about that.

But we remember what happened in October in this House, Mr. Speaker. And the public also remembers what happened in

October in this House, Mr. Speaker, when this government completely threw the rules of this legislature right out the window. They removed the ability to introduce guests. They removed the ability to introduce petitions, Mr. Speaker — petitions, which is a very important measure in terms of allowing the public to have a say in what goes on in this Legislative Building, Mr. Speaker. Very, very interesting indeed what we're seeing lately from this government.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, like I said before, a month and a half ago instead of allowing the bill to go through its regular democratic process like all bills in the legislature typically do, where we debate it over time and we move to adjourn to a debate and typically it moves over into spring, then we go to committee . . . After that at that point, Mr. Speaker, several months have passed. Individuals of the community, stakeholders, experts have had the ability to weigh in. They feed information to the opposition. They feed information to the minister. And then thoughtful discussions can happen on the legislative process, the bill that's before the legislature before it passes.

But what this government did when they thwarted democracy and threw the rules right out the window is they made sure that bill passed as quickly as it possibly could. And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, if they would have had their way, it would have gone through even faster than it did. Seven days, that's how much time the public had between introduction of that bill, Bill 137, and passage of that bill, Bill 137, Mr. Speaker. Now if that is not an affront to democracy, if that is not throwing the rules right out the window, I don't know what is, Mr. Speaker.

One other thing I did during the Bill 137 debate is — I and members on this side did very effectively, I'd like to say; I'm biased but — read letters that we had received from the public into the record. Despite this government's attempts to limit public participation in that bill, we still received hundreds and hundreds of letters that express their concerns about this legislation.

There's one letter that I read into the record at that time that I want to read in as much as I can get into the record today, Mr. Speaker, especially in light of what we've seen this week, the performative self-righteousness from some members on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, this is a letter from a lawyer in Saskatoon. She sent this to us to express her concerns about the bill, and she sent this to us on October 14th. She also sent this to the Premier and the Justice minister. She said:

To Saskatchewan leadership:

I write this email as a concerned resident of Saskatchewan, as a Jewish person living with a very real sense of fear and unsafeness. I write this email as a Canadian citizen whose gratitude for the existence of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms cannot be understated, especially in a time of crisis such as this, as a person who recognizes the fundamental importance of the protection the Charter affords to those most vulnerable. I write this email as a resident of Saskatchewan who is deeply concerned by the Sask Party's blatant subversion of rule of law and the Sask Party's failure to protect its electorate.

The horrendous and unspeakable acts of violence in Israel and Palestine this past week are unjustifiable. They have made Jewish people like me feel unsafe in our skin. No person in Saskatchewan, Canada, or the world should ever feel unsafe for being who they are. This includes the Palestinian people living in Gaza and beyond who do not support the terrorist organization Hamas, and who have become the victims of unjustifiable violence.

The right to feel safe and protected extends to all people, including the children and residents of Saskatchewan. Governments and thereby its elected officials have an obligation, a non-negotiable obligation to protect its citizens. This obligation extends to protecting the physical, economic, and psychological safety of its citizens. This is not an easy job. It is often a thankless job. But it is a necessary one, a job every single politician signs up for when they are elected to represent their electorate.

Bill 137 represents the Saskatchewan government's failure to protect one of its most vulnerable demographics — children. This alone should be enough to convince the Sask Party of the de-legitimacy of this bill. If a law begs the question that children may be harmed in the making of it, it is not worth implementing. Full stop. If numerous residents of Canada publicly and directly raise concerns with the safety of Saskatchewan children from the implementation of legislation, the governing party has an obligation to take this to heart and adjust its laws accordingly.

The concept of parental rights does not exist at law in Saskatchewan or Canada. In stark contrast, the obligation to protect the vulnerable and the obligation to protect children exists both in our civil and criminal law. It is a tenet of our legal system. To suggest otherwise is simply inaccurate. If government enacts legislation that is lawfully determined to violate the rights and protections of Canadian citizens, as protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the law is struck down as unconstitutional.

This is the basis of our constitutional democracy. This represents the proper checks and balances we have created in our civil and democratic society. Government doesn't always get it right. The court doesn't always get it right. They communicate with one another. They dialogue. And in doing so the governments and the courts create laws that govern its citizens in the most humane, respectful, and protective manner that adheres to our Constitution.

The Sask Party's staunch decision to invoke the notwithstanding clause in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms represents the clearest affront to Canada's civil society. As a resident of Saskatchewan, a citizen of Canada, and a member of a minority group, the use of the notwithstanding clause conveys a message to me and all other minorities that we are dispensable, that we are not worthy of protection, that we particularly are not worthy of the protection afforded by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This Act says to me my government does not care about me. It does not protect me. This is the single biggest failing of a government.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to have enough time to finish the rest of this letter, but it was a very powerful letter and I encourage members opposite, if they've forgotten, to read the entirety of the letter that I quoted into *Hansard* at that time, and perhaps there can be some lessons learned by members opposite that are included in this letter.

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

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I look around at my government members and I see parents. I look across the aisle and I see parents, parents who I know and believe that they are the most, most important people in their child's life, and I know who also want to know what's going on in their child or children's lives at home, at school, and in their community.

Heck, we even have apps nowadays on our phones where we can track our kids' every move and know where they are, and sometimes even know who they are with.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have eight children. They are all grown up now and most are starting to have children of their own, and some of them have young children in elementary school. I know they are very involved in their children's lives just as much as I was when mine were in school, and just as I am even now.

As a parent I was very involved in my children's schools and in their education. I volunteered; I coached; I sat on parent councils; I helped with school immunizations; I chaperoned on field trips and at school dances; I read with students; I helped with their homework, school projects; organized and put on penny carnivals, cultural days, bake sales. And the list of volunteer duties goes on.

And I'm sure most if not every parent in this Chamber did the same. But I also know as technology with computers, iPads, cell phones, and social media, possibly both parents in the household working, kids and parents have become more disconnected with one another, possibly spending less time sharing what went on in their day and having important and sometimes those very hard but valuable discussions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've had parents call me who have offered to volunteer in their child's school, helping in the classroom or with an upcoming event in the school, but were turned down by the teacher and staff. No reason given — just no, we don't need you. Not cool. And yes, I get it. Sometimes it's the child, especially the pre-teens who may say, don't ask my mom.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the safety and well-being of students and parent involvement in their child's education is a priority for our government. And the default position of schools should always, always be to include parents in their child's school life, not to exclude them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill 137 was in response to the provincial court granting an injunction that calls for a pause of the preferred-name-and-pronoun policy. Our government began hearing from parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, guardians from all across this province over the summer, which is why we know this bill has strong support from the majority of Saskatchewan residents.

It was necessary in order to provide clarity to school divisions regarding the policies and ensure parents' rights with respect to their children's education and that those rights are protected. They do have the right to be involved and know what's going on in their children's education, what resources are being used to teach their child, and who is teaching it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I recall when my children in about grade 1, there was a program called good touch/bad touch — not sure if it's still being used — then in grade 2, stranger danger; and in grade 6 health the beginning of sex education; and in grade 8, the reproductive system and birth. All taught by the classroom teacher or a health education teacher.

I haven't looked at the curriculum in a long time, and some of this may have changed at the age level it is now introduced. But how do I remember this? Every parent was sent home a note inviting them to attend and partake in the exact same lessons their children would receive. If the teacher didn't get a response that they would be attending, the teacher called the parent or parents or guardian up to invite them. And after attending, the parents had to sign off whether they wanted their child to participate in the course or not. Both my husband and I were always, always very appreciative of this invite. We knew what was being taught to our children and who were teaching it to them. We are grateful for the wonderful teachers our children had in their lives.

But somewhere along the line somehow some schools in this province seemed to have drifted away from including parents in these very important discussions. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill enshrines our belief into legislation that it is in the best interests of children when parents are involved in their education, in their classrooms, and in the important decisions in their lives.

The current education Act, *The Education Act, 1995*, was silent on these issues and resulted in limited parental rights, responsibilities, and decision making on key issues surrounding the education of their children. We shouldn't have needed to go there. But we know parents and guardians have a very, very important role to play in supporting and protecting their children. Children working through questions and issues relating to gender identity need support, and parents and guardians should be involved in these discussions and decisions.

Making amendments to *The Education Act* and adding to certain sections of the Act has reinforced the rights of parents and guardians. Section 197.2 makes clear that parents or guardians of a pupil have the right to act as the primary decision maker with respect to their child's education. This includes, but is not limited to, being provided with at least two weeks' notice prior to sexual health content being presented to their child, including the subject matter and date; withdraw their child from that presentation; and provide consent for their child if under the age of 16 to use a gendered name and identity prior to its use by school staff.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just think how stressful, confusing, and anxious for a child if staff and classmates are calling them by one pronoun and name in school and their parents are calling them by a different pronoun and name at home.

[12:00]

Section 197.3 outlines responsibilities of parents and guardians to co-operate with the staff of their child's school to ensure the child complies with a code of conduct and administrative policies, including discipline and behaviour management, and take all reasonable steps to ensure their child attends school.

And lastly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, section 197.4 outlines the legislative framework for consent from a parent or guardian that is required for a student under the age of 16 to use an alternative gendered name and identity and have it used by school staff in a school setting.

And most importantly, this section adds protections that if a child may suffer physical, emotional, or mental harm by obtaining consent from the parent, the principal will engage the appropriate school resources to support and assist the child in developing a plan for that child to address the request with their parents.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the director of North East School Division said this, and I quote:

Regarding the consent of name changes, we believe trusting relationships with students do not come at the cost of infringing on the trust of parents. Our goal is and has been to support students together with parents.

The director of education for South East Cornerstone Public School Division stated, and I quote:

I think the major difference appears to be the policy regarding pronouns and name changes for trans youth. We have always had a default position in this school division that parents should be involved, regardless of age, in these discussions.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP Opposition Leader was even quoted as saying, "We know that outcomes for kids are better when home and school work together."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a parent I know that I am one of the most important people in my children's lives. And I needed to know then, during their formal education years as young children and adolescents discovering themselves, and even today I continue to need to know what is going on in their lives so that I can be there to support them in any and all ways.

Throughout the summer, early spring, and right up until Monday, I have travelled throughout my constituency, meeting and speaking with hundreds of parents. This bill and the topic of parent rights has come up on every doorstep, and without hesitation they have all thanked me for Bill 137. I know Bill 137 was the right thing to do for both students and parents. Thank you.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What a dubious treat it is to enter into this 75-minute debate. Thrilled to have listened to some of the rhetorical grasping of members opposite as they struggle to justify Bill 137, which is completely deplorable, Mr. Speaker. And all you've heard from them is a repetition of, you know, parents should be involved in

their children's life. And again, Mr. Speaker, this is something on which this House agrees.

But what we don't agree on, Mr. Speaker, the absolutely deplorable actions of members opposite to change the rules of this Assembly to override the Charter and to impact the rights of the most vulnerable children in Saskatchewan, amongst the most vulnerable children, making them that much more vulnerable, Mr. Speaker. Because of course this isn't about kids who have great parents, loving homes; this is about those children, the very few who are unfortunately, unfortunately not supported at home and at risk. So, Mr. Speaker, what we saw today from . . .

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The NDP position has been to oppose parental involvement, parental choice, and the ability for parents to know what their child is talking to their teacher about. However the Opposition Leader finally spoke some common sense and said, "We know that outcomes for kids are better when home and school work together." We agree, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So to the member from Saskatoon Nutana, do you agree with your leader and this government that outcomes for kids are better when home and school work together? Or will you continue to oppose parental involvement in the classroom? Yes or no?

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Well you know, I don't know if the member opposite was listening, but I did in my comments address the issue of parental involvement and how there is no dispute on that question. And so it's passing strange that when we presented a motion to have a parental involvement engagement provision in the legislation, that it was voted down. So I don't understand why you would vote against an amendment that was in support of parental inclusion.

Clearly we agree with that, and we're on record as saying such. We're not going to back down from that. What we object to is putting vulnerable children at risk, ignoring the judicial decision around children's rights, and the overreach by this government and the implementation of an emergency session.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In his remarks the member from Lumsden said he believes in parental engagement as both a parent and as a grandparent. So my question to him today is, why did the member from Lumsden vote against our amendment to create a parental engagement strategy? How can he continue to explain to parents that they don't want them involved in their children's education?

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

Mr. B. McLeod: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Deputy

Speaker. Moments ago the member from Regina University spoke about support for parents in the education system and then used the word “but.” When you use the word “but,” Mr. Deputy Speaker, it negates everything that’s said before that question as asked.

On this side of the House we support parents’ rights in the education system. Always have. Always will. And that is now enshrined in legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is clear, crystal clear, that the NDP oppose parental involvement with their children’s lives. Our government is committed to supporting parents’ involvement in their children’s education. To the member from Saskatoon Nutana — and I didn’t listen to you — do you believe that parents should not have rights in Saskatchewan?

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

Ms. Ritchie: — You know, Mr. Speaker, as a parent I have great sympathy and empathy for, you know, all children in this province and their parents. And when it comes to the rights of a vulnerable child, as has been laid out very clearly by the judge that made a decision in this case, it is not acceptable to put children at risk of irreparable harm when they are not ready to come out to their parents. And I think it’s hard as parents to, you know, be able to stand down and respect our children’s rights. It’s not in our nature, but sometimes it’s necessary and particularly those who are at risk.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the member for Lumsden-Morse who talked a bit about the use of the notwithstanding clause. I’m curious about his opinion on the use of the term “judicial overreach.” Does he agree with the Premier that Justice Megaw’s injunction was judicial overreach?

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

Mr. B. McLeod: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for the question from the member opposite. Judicial overreach, that is why the notwithstanding clause is in place. And lost in the conversation is that for me, the policies that were already existing in numerous school divisions across the province mirror what this policy is. Yeah.

Why do the NDP want to shut parents out of the education? In this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our default position will always be that parents should be involved, especially when it comes to big decisions or controversial issues. Mr. Speaker, that will always be our position.

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

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our government recognizes that family and parents are the fundamental building block of our society. This government will not keep families and parents in the dark on what is going on in their children’s lives.

To the member from Saskatoon Nutana, do you agree with the member from Regina Rosemont that keeping parents involved and informed with the lives of their children is a farce?

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know, I find it highly concerning that the members opposite have such difficulty understanding the complexity and the nuance in this issue. We have said over and over and over again that we support parents being involved in the education and the upbringing of their children. That is not what is at dispute here.

What we are talking about is the rights of vulnerable children who may not be in safe situations where they can come out to their parents. And children are the best judges of when they are in that safe circumstance.

And I would like to ask the member for Lumsden-Morse to tell me, does he think that banning consent education will lower sexual assault rates, or does he think our nation-worst sexual assault rates are fine and dandy?

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I also want to know the member for Lloydminster’s opinion on the Premier’s use of the term “judicial overreach.” Does she also agree with the Premier that Justice Megaw’s injunction was judicial overreach?

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

Ms. C. Young: — Mr. Speaker, since April I have been on numerous — hundreds — of doorsteps speaking with parents, and this topic has come up in every one. And as I said, they have thanked me for introducing Bill 137, the Parents’ Bill of Rights, to recognize the work that they have done with their children and want to continue doing in supporting them in their education and in their daily lives. Thank you.

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

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the biggest mistakes any government can make is keeping parents in the dark about their kids’ lives. Bill 137 enshrines into legislation that it’s the best interest of children when parents are involved in their education in their classrooms. And that includes the important decisions in their lives until they become adults.

So to the member from Regina Douglas Park, I honestly want to know, do you believe that you know better than the parents in this province concerning what is best for school-aged children in their lives?

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member opposite for the question. It was a sincere question, and I will say that . . .

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 — Regulation of Legal Firearms Possession

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Bradshaw.]

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

[12:15]

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for providing me the opportunity to speak to the motion that was presented so eloquently by a member that looks very similar to you, I believe, the member from Carrot River.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I as well as so many members on this side of the House, and I believe even a member of the opposition, are legal gun owners. Last winter I completed my restricted possession and acquisition training, or RPAL, so I can acquire and possess restricted weapons. Now ultimately under the new federal gun restrictions, now I have an RPAL only hoping that maybe a long-lost relative or maybe the previous member from Cannington is willing to bequeath me one of his prized possessions when he is no longer on this side of the earth, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Just for the folks listening at home, the RPAL and PAL [possession and acquisition licence] courses I took were single, full-day courses offered in Regina by one of the many reputable training facilities that provide a top-quality education on the safe use, the handling, and storage of firearms. Now these courses were full. They were full of all genders, all ages, all ethnic backgrounds that really just wanted to get a full working knowledge, you know, on the safe use of all types of guns.

We received both in-class and hands-on training in all types of guns whether they were handguns, long guns, even black powder handguns, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Really at the end of the day, for each course we then completed a very difficult and comprehensive written and verbal test. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like you and this Assembly to know that you can still get freaked out over these exams, even when you're over 60 years old. And I thought my days of losing hair over exams were over but apparently not. Apparently not, nope. My hair-losing days are over, yes.

But anyway these courses really are offered all across the

province in centres, large cities, and towns across the province and really across the country, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Bottom line, we've taken extraordinary measures in this province to ensure really that safety and competency is tested before anyone is handed a possession licence.

I asked a couple of the instructors if they have ever failed, you know, a course attendee, and actually they said it's quite common, quite common. In fact in most classes they have at least one participant who doesn't make it to the end of the class and ultimately has to start over. That wasn't me. Actually I'm very proud of the fact that I did very well in those exams.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that same caution is really practised in all of our safe shooting ranges, whether it's a Regina Wildlife Federation range found in the RM [rural municipality] of Edenwold or maybe the Churchbridge Gun Club in my hometown. Fun fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Churchbridge Gun Club has been in existence for over 50 years. It's on land located by our own Wagon Wheel Seed Corp, my farm, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In fact I remember going out as a kid, you know, earn a few, couple of bucks by loading traps, maybe picking up misses out in the field and even keeping score for the hundreds of shooters that came out on a weekend from across Western Canada, participated at our trap club. In fact talking with one of our long-term shooters, we estimated there was over 88 tonnes of lead that had been deposited on that trap club. Now I even tried to harvest it. Not one of my smartest adventures, but we can cover that on another day, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But while I'm on the topic of the Churchbridge Gun Club, I'd like to recognize one of the very talented members of our club and a good friend of mine, Dale Shackleton. Now Dale has participated in a number of provincial and national trap shooting championships really across the country and has been very successful, most recently winning the single A provincial championship in 2023 and the Canadian Trapshooting D doubles championship.

He's won many other significant trap shooting awards during his trap shooting career. In fact he's always one of the first at the club to help out. He's very willing to help new shooters. He did give me advice that maybe I should try shooting with at least one eye open, may perhaps enhance my shooting ability. I will try that.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Dale's championship gun is a Perazzi, a Perazzi MX2000 likely valued at over \$20,000, and thankfully didn't make the current federal prohibited weapon ban, because ultimately would register that weapon valueless. No value to it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now Dale credits his shooting success to listening and watching his mentor and shooting legend Rod Boll. Rod Boll comes from Fillmore, competed in both the Olympics and the Pan American Games, where he was a gold medal winner, and was just recently admitted, unfortunately posthumously, to the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, why I mention all of this is we have thousands of responsible gun owners in this province, many who

live and work in this building, who do not need to be condemned by our federal government as lawless gun-toting renegades. In fact not many know that Emni Eltassi, senior admin in Environment, did biathlons. In fact she was on the Manitoba marksmanship team and, I understand, is a very skilled marksman. Cole Blatter, comms in Health, is a master marksman and a trophy hunter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the absurdity of the federal gun ban actually hits very close to home with a constituent, a very entrepreneurial constituent who was forced to shut down his paintball park and his airsoft park. The current legislation includes airsoft guns under the replica ban, essentially criminalizing a sport. He indicated there was no consultation with the industry before the government did this. Airsoft toys are not a threat to public safety. They are made so you can play with your friends and not hurt your friends. All airsoft stores in Canada are small businesses and they can't take blows like this.

Another industry that unfortunately is very affected by the ill-conceived gun ban is the Saskatchewan Commission of Professional Outfitters. Now this is a group that has estimated that the outfitting industry adds \$126.4 million to the provincial gross domestic product, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 84.4 million to the local GDP [gross domestic product], and has created 5,144 jobs provincially and over 4,000 jobs in northern Saskatchewan. Government revenues — us, Mr. Deputy Speaker — \$12.3 million provincially, and contributes over \$12 million federally.

One in every 111 jobs in Saskatchewan is dependent directly or indirectly on the operations of outfitters. In northern Saskatchewan approximately 1 in every 17 jobs depends on the outfitting industry.

So once again, unintended consequences provided by a federal Liberal-NDP coalition government . . . cannot think beyond their virtue-signalling identity to get things right. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is getting to be a habit, an unfortunate habit with this federal Liberal-NDP government. For anyone keeping score at home, let's call Bill C-21 a swing and a miss, strike one. Fun fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, did you know that Bill C-21 is named *An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms)*, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

November 16th, last week, federal court judge Justice Furlanetto ruled that the government's move to list all plastic items as toxic was unreasonable and unconstitutional. The move to list plastic items as toxic was really a key step that allowed Ottawa to proceed with a ban on six single-use plastic items, including straws and shopping bags. "There is no reasonable apprehension that all listed PMI [plastic manufactured items] are harmful," Justice Furlanetto wrote. Justice Furlanetto found that not all plastics constitute such a danger.

Regulating waste ultimately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is generally a provincial responsibility, as should be gun control. The government is only able to regulate substances, and again back to the federal plastics ban . . . is for environmental protections listed as toxic under the Canadian *Environmental Protection Act*. So again a justice, federal court justice has ruled that . . . unconstitutional, our federal government's approach to plastics. So oops, swing and a miss, strike two, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

October 13th, headlines at CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] are: Supreme Court rules environmental impact legislation largely unconstitutional. Say it ain't so, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Canada's top court once again delivered a highly anticipated judgment, writing in a majority opinion that Ottawa's *Impact Assessment Act* is largely unconstitutional.

The IAA [*Impact Assessment Act*], previously known as Bill 69, the no-pipelines bill, allows federal regulators to consider the potential environmental and social impacts of various resource and infrastructure projects. It was enacted in 2019.

Justice Wagner . . . Ultimately this is what we're hearing from our federal justices. She wrote that ". . . the balance of the scheme [involving] designated projects [was] unconstitutional." Under the IAA, designated projects are those projects that are set out in the regulations or are subject to a ministerial order. "In my view," she indicated, "Parliament has plainly overstepped its constitutional competence in enacting this designated projects scheme."

Justice Wagner wrote this. So bottom line, ruling indicates that the federal government needs to accept that there is exclusive provincial jurisdiction under the Constitution, and they will be required to work with the provinces and territories on these areas of shared priority.

Oops, another swing and a miss, strike three. The Liberal-NDP coalition federal government struck out. Struck out. Time for a more responsible team playing for our side, the common-sense side, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The side that wants a responsible, practical government that governs to support people versus oppress their people. I believe it was even Confucius who said, you know, an oppressive government is more feared, more feared than a tiger. Or maybe it was one of the United States founding fathers, Alexander Hamilton, that said, it's not tyranny we desire, it's a just, limited federal government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we recognize that legal gun ownership is not like it was when the member from Carrot River was growing up in rural Saskatchewan. I don't believe it's currently acceptable to bring your favourite .22 to school hung in the gun rack of your unlocked half-ton in the parking lot and then ready to shoot gophers on the football field after school. We've moved on from that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan has implemented the common sense . . . *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act* to protect Saskatchewan residents and increase public safety. This Act establishes a provincial firearms regulatory system that will promote the safe and responsible use of firearms. This will grant law enforcement more options to address individuals who commit non-violent regulatory firearms offences.

The Saskatchewan Firearms Act allows the Chief Firearms Officer to set licensing requirements for businesses or individuals involved in the seizure of firearms prohibited by the federal government. As a part of this legislation, the Sask firearms office is going to establish a Sask firearms ballistics lab that'll help support police services directly and provide Saskatchewan-based ballistics and firearms expertise that is often required to be brought in from other jurisdictions or even across the country.

And our government supports initiatives that reduce the criminal use of firearms while preventing gang violence and stopping illegal guns from entering our province. But this Act will also protect the rights of lawful firearm owners in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, part of this government's common-sense solution to problems was the appointment of our first Chief Firearms Officer. Provincially appointed Chief Firearms Officer's well positioned really to represent Saskatchewan's position on firearms regulations as well as promote firearms safety, education, and establish effective communication between the many stakeholders in Saskatchewan.

Our first appointee is Robert Freberg, just a great guy really. Robert served as the CEO of Brigadier Security systems in Saskatoon, Elite Security systems in Regina for over 34 years. Been a board member, volunteer for Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation for more than 40 years, and served as the president for five years.

Mr. Freberg has been an elected member of the national board of directors for the Canadian sports shooting association. He was a firearms instructor for the possession acquisition licence, or PAL, and restricted possession acquisition licence, the RPAL, programs.

Mr. Freberg has been involved in recreation shooting sports as a competitor, a hunter, and he's a licensed gunsmith and has been for decades. Mr. Freberg has a strong mandate to enhance education, safety, and communication to Saskatchewan's rural and urban stakeholders in his role as Chief Firearms Officer. As the CFO [Chief Firearms Officer], he's responsible for the operation of the Saskatchewan firearms office.

And this is an office dedicated to support strong initiatives that protect the rights of law-abiding firearms owners, enhance the training and education around safe use and storage of firearms, supports police services, reduces the criminal use of firearms, prevents gang violence, and stops illegal guns from entering the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this office, as early as October of this year, has performed 108 refusals and 270 revocations. This is a 34 per cent increase in refusals and revocations compared to when the federal government was in charge of this file.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are very well positioned in Saskatchewan through the work of Robert Freberg and his office and the implementation of *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act* to more than adequately administer and regulate firearms possession in this province. Time our federal government stayed between the foul lines and really stays in their lanes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this province is well positioned to manage legal firearm use in this province. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to support the motion presented by the member from Carrot River that says:

That this Assembly calls upon the Government of Canada to devolve all relevant parts of the *Firearms Act* to the province of Saskatchewan in order to allow it to administer and regulate legal firearms possession.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I adjourn debate.

[12:30]

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Deputy House Speaker has moved that this Assembly does now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:31.]

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President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Lori Carr
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Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
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Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
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Saskatchewan Government Insurance
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