



FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

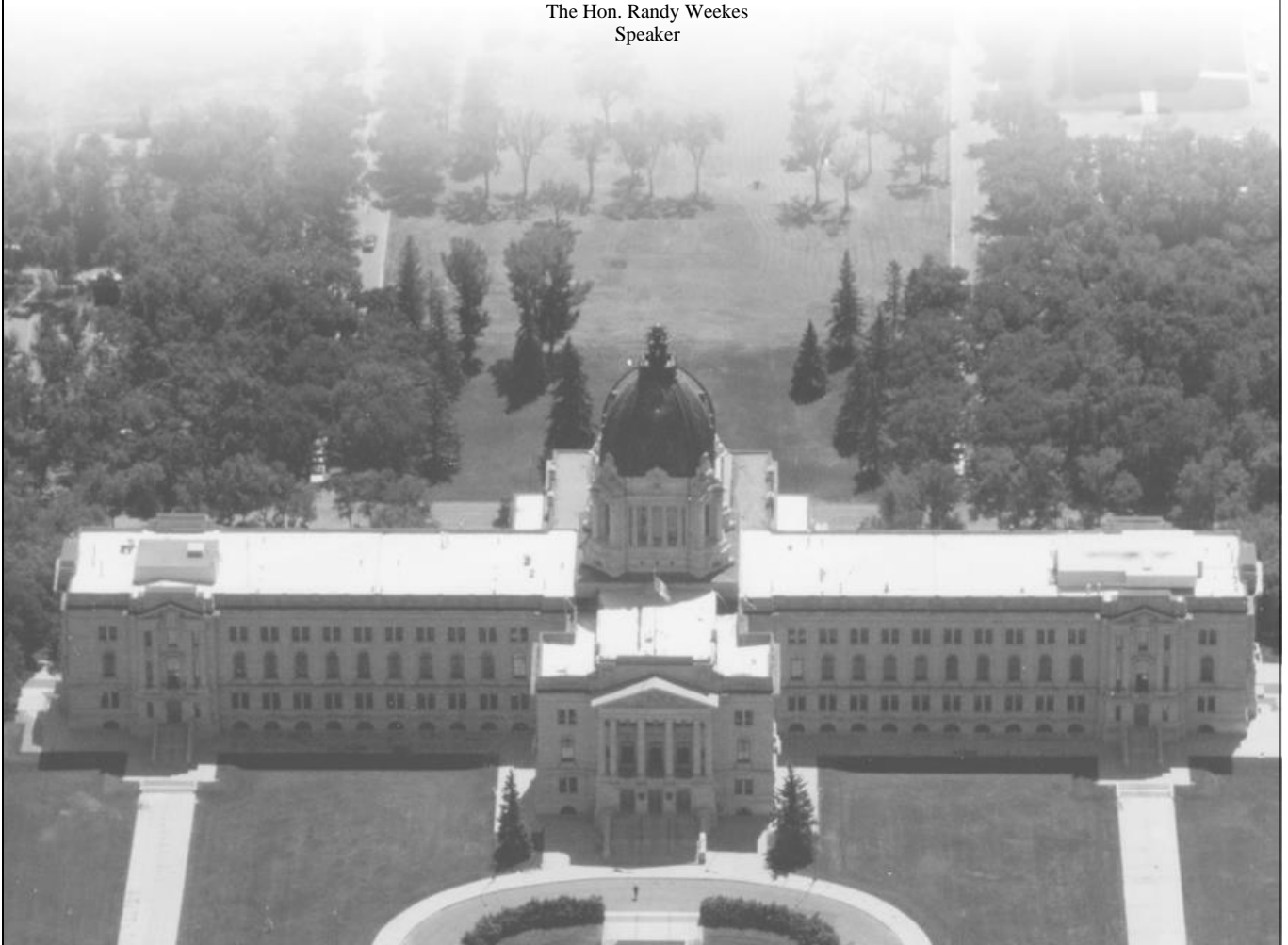
of the

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)

Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)

Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)

Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

Burki, Noor — Regina Coronation Park (NDP)

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Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)

Clarke, Jared — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP)

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Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)

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Hargrave, Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)

Harpauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)

Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)

Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)

Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)

Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)

Kaeding, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)

Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)

Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP)

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Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

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McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)

Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)

Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)

Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

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Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)

Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

Skoropad, Dana — Arm River (SP)

Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)

Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)

Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)

Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)

Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)

Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (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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Legislative Assembly are available
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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

The Speaker: — I'd just like to welcome all the guests in the galleries. It's great to see so many people out. I'd just like to caution you that you're not to take part in any of the deliberations. That's no talking or yelling or clapping, and certainly no pictures or video recordings. I hope you enjoy your stay.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask 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. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce a group of health care workers seated in your gallery here today. They are joined by the Ministry of Health's chief nursing officer, Liliana Canadic, here this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, these health care workers come from different backgrounds, but they all have one thing in common. They want to be part of the solution to strengthen health care teams across our province.

Crissa Sarte and Herschel Andrew Urbina are registered nurses from the Philippines. They recently arrived to Saskatchewan for their clinical training as part of their nursing bridging program. Crissa will be working in Wilkie and Andrew will be working in Wolseley, and they both look forward to serving in these communities, Mr. Speaker.

Crissa and Andrew are amongst more than 410 Filipino nurses who received offers of employment in Saskatchewan. Currently 185 are enrolled in training and nearly 90 of them have arrived from the Philippines for the clinical portion here and will begin working once they're licensed.

Mr. Speaker, the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] has also had great success in connecting recent nurse graduates from the province and across Canada with employment opportunities, and since last December the SHA has hired 870 new graduates. Mr. Speaker, Bailee Krupski is amongst those and she is here with us today. Bailee is a registered nurse and she's been working at the Regina General Hospital since January.

Also with us today, Mr. Speaker, we have Tyson Meyers who is a registered nurse working at Lanigan Hospital in the emergency room. Tyson is also a recent nurse graduate and a recipient of the rural and remote recruitment incentive of up to \$50,000 offered to new employees working in nine high-priority health

occupations, which has had great success with over 220 incentives approved to date in 54 rural communities.

Also with us here today, Mr. Speaker, is Tammy Neuwirth. She is a medical laboratory technologist and is the director of laboratory medicine for the rural areas of Saskatchewan with the SHA. Tammy is based in Swift Current and oversees nearly 90 medical labs in the province. And in addition to serving in this role, she also contributes to strengthening rural Saskatchewan as a person with rural roots herself.

Mr. Speaker, we're pleased that they, as well as many others, have chosen to make the move to Saskatchewan or stay in our province and grow a health career here. We know that there are challenges from time to time in our health care system. We had some of those discussions earlier today when we met.

But it's important to also recognize the successes that we are having to attract and retain valuable health care workers, and our province is a great place of opportunity to work in health care with financial loans, bursaries, and other scholarships to students and many competitive incentive packages and other avenues to build that career. Mr. Speaker, it's an opportunity for us to highlight the ongoing work of our health human resources action plan that was launched last year.

Finally I want to also thank the Ministry of Health, represented today by Liliana, the chief nursing officer, for all of her efforts and the efforts of her team to advance the multiple initiatives of the HHR [health human resources] action plan. She's been involved in the developments of the HHR action plan since its beginning and works very closely with ministry partners to advance professional nursing practice here in Saskatchewan.

And I want to thank the SHA for their work as well to implement the HHR action plan and provide ongoing support.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to welcome our guests today and to ask all members to please join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to join with the Minister of Health opposite in welcoming these incredibly important and valued individuals to their Legislative Assembly. What great news it is to see some of these folks deciding to either move to Saskatchewan from places that may be near or as far away as the Philippines. You're very much welcome here and in your building, in the legislature, for us to say thank you for making that decision.

As the minister noted, we are seeing challenging times in our health system and much of that is due to staffing levels, and so your help here is very much needed and appreciated by all members in this Assembly. Great to see that you're making a variety of places home in Saskatchewan. Listening to the minister speak, I heard Wilkie, Wolseley, Swift Current, Regina, and Lanigan mentioned. We know that there are hometowns across our province where more health care workers and help is desperately needed.

And so on behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to thank you for making that decision to go into a career in health care here in our great province of Saskatchewan, and I invite all members to join me in welcoming you to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think you have a fine young man behind your clock that I can't see. His dad is a cowboy, his mom's a nurse, and he's both. He's here with the nurses today. So I would just ask everyone to join with me in welcoming Tyson Meyers to his Legislative Assembly. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to 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.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce a group of athletes, performers seated in the Speaker's gallery from Team Saskatchewan Gymnastrada. Mr. Speaker, last summer Team Saskatchewan headed towards the World Gymnastrada in Amsterdam to represent our province at a showcase with participants from 60 countries. Team Saskatchewan is made up of 54 participants from across the province, from multiple disciplines of gymnastics combined with traditional powwow dancers and song.

Mr. Speaker, World Gymnastrada happens every four years and this year Gymnastics Saskatchewan collaborated with Peepeekisis First Nations to create a one-of-a-kind performance showcasing our province and our culture. We are so honoured to have 21 participants, their coaches, and many who have travelled here today.

We also have supporters joining us and I would like to acknowledge them: Gymnastics Saskatchewan CEO [chief executive officer], Klara Miller; Rob Kennedy, manager of sport division, Sask Sport; officials from Sask Sport, Gymnastics Saskatchewan, and Saskatchewan Gymnastrada.

I'm proud to know that these performers represented us on the world stage. Their innovative combination of sport, culture provide an opportunity for Indigenous dance and culture to be showcased while demonstrating the extraordinary talent, teamwork, and sportsmanship of Saskatchewan athletes.

I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming Team Saskatchewan and thanking them for being such wonderful examples of what Saskatchewan has to offer the world's stage. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a tremendous honour to join with the member opposite to welcome Team Saskatchewan, these accomplished athletes and performers, to the Saskatchewan Assembly, to your Assembly.

I want to thank all the coaches and all the supportive organizations — Saskatchewan gymnastics, Saskatchewan sport — that are here today, as well as all the Indigenous leadership, the partnership with Peepeekisis. What you have accomplished in taking your skill to the world stage makes us all so very proud, and I just want to thank you for joining us here today in your Assembly to properly be honoured, and to let you know to continue your efforts and to know that every member of this Assembly wants to celebrate your efforts and that you make everyone in Saskatchewan proud.

So on behalf of the official opposition, we join in a very warm welcome. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

While on my feet, I'm thrilled to have a group of grade 9s from Martin Collegiate here today. These young people, these are the leaders of today and tomorrow. I look forward to a visit with them after question period here today, Mr. Speaker.

I want to welcome them, and I also want to welcome the teachers that have joined them here today: Ms. Wenzel, Mr. Martin, and Mr. Kress as well. Mr. Kress, I'll give him a little bit of a special shout-out. He's a friend, Mr. Speaker. He's finishing up his internship at Martin and he's entering into the profession as a teacher.

Mr. Kress is just an awesome guy, Mr. Speaker. He's a great hockey player. He played in the WHL [Western Hockey League], played for the P.A. [Prince Albert] Raiders. He also played for the Everett Silvertips. He then went to work being trained as a carpenter and worked as a carpenter. He then trained as a firefighter and worked as a firefighter. And now he's training and has been educated getting his Bachelor of Education, will serve as a teacher, and he'll be an incredible teacher, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kress also gives back to his community in many ways. He was recognized with a Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal for his leadership in revitalizing a park with a pump track and an outdoor rink and a shack and playground equipment, Mr. Speaker. He's a hunter and a fisher and just an all-around awesome guy. I've had the pleasure of coaching his son who's an awesome hockey player, Mr. Speaker.

And I ask all members to welcome these three teachers and this wonderful class of grade 9s from Martin Collegiate to their Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join the Minister of Parks, Culture, Sport, and the member from Regina Rosemont to introduce some special guests that are part of the Gymnaestrada group today that are from my constituency. Kessi Kada is a participant and her dad, Tyler Tranberg, who I understand was a chaperone on the trip and has many, many stories about what the students and the chaperones did on the trip, I understand. Tyler's a superintendent with Topa Contracting.

Kessi is one of 14 gymnasts that come from the Esterhazy area that were part of the group that went to Amsterdam. Kessi was practising for over three years for this event. She's in her second year of education at the U of R [University of Regina]. She is still contributing as a gymnast, now as an alumni member, to the Esterhazy club. So she's giving back to her community. She hopes to be a teacher someday back in Esterhazy or area. I'd like to welcome Kessi, her dad, and their colleagues to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to join with the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport and welcome all of these athletes here today. I mean, for athletes to perform at this level they need a strong support structure, so I want to thank all of the parents, grandparents, the kohkoms, the mosôms, that help them get to where they are today.

A big shout-out to all the people from Peepeekisis First Nation here today, Mr. Speaker, and a big shout-out to council member Allen Bird, all the good work that he's doing on council there, really advocating for Peepeekisis First Nation. So please join me in welcoming these people to this, their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to join the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport and the fellow members opposite in congratulating the team for this amazing accomplishment, and recognizing Kara Thorpe, a very hard-working, dedicated volunteer and one of the main organizers and coach of this team. And I ask all members to join me in welcoming Kara to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you I ask all the members of this Assembly to help me welcome 54 very smart students from Harbour Landing School. And I ask all the members of the Assembly to welcome this group of students to their Legislative Assembly with their teacher, Danielle Stinson. And after question period, we're going to meet for the photo op and some question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to welcome of course Ms. Stinson, but Ms. McFetridge who's here as well, Mr. Speaker, from Harbour Landing. Here you have two amazing teachers.

Ms. McFetridge is also very involved in the community along with her husband, Kyle, who's an amazing coach both in football and in hockey. I've had the privilege of working together with them on these fronts as well, Mr. Speaker. They're the epitome of community leaders, Mr. Speaker. And I ask all in this Assembly to give a special warm welcome to Ms. Stinson, Ms. McFetridge, and good folks and leaders in the community like Kyle McFetridge.

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

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome specifically a member from Harbour Landing School here, Macie Kuntz. Macie, give us a wave. She's our granddaughter's cousin, who also does major duty as their babysitter. And I found Macie to be a very creative, caring person who I'm very, very proud to have as a family member. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome Macie, her classmates, and teachers to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise again today in the Legislative Assembly to read this petition calling for the funding of in vitro fertilization treatments here in Saskatchewan.

One in six people in Canada will experience or struggle with infertility, Mr. Speaker, and these treatments are cost prohibitive for many. Despite health care being a right here in Canada, there is no government financial support in Saskatchewan for those requiring fertility treatments. Saskatchewan people's ability to conceive should not depend on their socio-economic status, and investing in people determined to grow their families right here makes economic sense. Mr. Speaker, other provinces have created programs that financially assist in providing these treatments to those struggling to conceive.

I'll read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition today are from P.A. I do so submit.

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

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present the following petition:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: whereas the Trudeau Liberal-NDP [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 below undersigned are residents of Regina, Lafleche, and Spiritwood. I do so present.

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

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present our petition calling on government to address and improve mental health services for northern and rural Saskatchewan. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that the rate of suicide among Indigenous people is three times higher than that of non-Indigenous people; that the suicide rate of Indigenous people living on reserves are twice as high as those living off-reserve; that the historical and ongoing impact of colonization, displacement, and intergenerational trauma are related to the high rate of suicide among Indigenous people; that government has a role to play in destigmatizing mental health and addiction; and that funding safe consumption sites, wellness centres, and specialized outreach programs would save lives.

I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to call on the Government of Saskatchewan to address and work with vulnerable communities in the North and rural areas and to provide adequate mental health funding and services for the northern and rural Indigenous communities.

Mr. Speaker, the signatory of this petition all reside here in Saskatoon. Thank you.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling on the government to address the affordability crisis. The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: that half of Saskatchewan residents were living paycheque to paycheque before transportation and food costs skyrocketed in 2022, and that the Sask Party government's new tax and fee hikes make life more

expensive.

I was out on the doorstep yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and people were more than happy to sign this petition. They are feeling it, as I have said time and again when I stand up to present this petition. They're feeling it today and they need relief today from this government.

I'll read the prayer:

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

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

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House yet again today to call on the government to improve labour laws in Saskatchewan.

Those who've signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: that even after the October 1st increase, Saskatchewan's minimum wage is the lowest in Canada at \$14 an hour. In addition, the opposition has twice introduced paid sick leave legislation since the onset of the pandemic, calling for a minimum of 10 paid sick days each year and 14 days during a public health crisis. Paid sick leave has been proven to save employers money while making workplaces healthier and safer for all workers.

Seventy-one per cent of workers in Canada have experienced workplace violence and/or harassment, and in 2023 the Canadian Bar Association at their AGM [annual general meeting] adopted a resolution discouraging the use of nondisclosure agreements to silence the whistle-blowers and victims of abuse, discrimination, and harassment in the workplace. And, Mr. Speaker, we all know that 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, this mirrors the provisions in our private member's bill, Bill 613. We do hope the government passes that. The individuals who've signed this petition today come from Regina, Saskatoon, and Weyburn. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Canadian Western Agribition

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Canadian Western Agribition, the best beef show on the continent and the largest livestock show in the nation, was another resounding success. The Saskatchewan agriculture industry has so much to offer, and the world was here to see it. There were visitors from 60 countries at the show either doing business or getting the Canadian agriculture experience.

International buyers were in the barns buying genetics, a testament to the quality of Canadian cattle. Earlier exports indicated that overall attendance was strong throughout the week with almost 15,000 people walk through the doors on Friday alone. A packed house watched the Beef Supreme on Saturday evening, a multiple-breed competition that crowns the best of the best cattle from the United States and Canada. The attendees of the Grain Expo earlier in the week heard about Saskatchewan's sustainably produced crops in emerging agriculture technology.

Over 100 events took place over the six days, including not only cattle but also bison, sheep, and alpacas. We know this event is very important for the livestock sector and our provincial economy, with an anticipated economic impact of 96 million.

Thank you again to the Canadian Western Agribition staff and the volunteers who make this event truly one of a kind. We already look forward to next year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

James Smith Cree Nation Security Force

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to rise today to recognize the James Smith Cree Nation and their journey toward a self-administered police service.

This fall I had the opportunity to meet with Eddie Head, who's leading the James Smith Cree Nation security force, and some of the security team to talk about their experience. This program is currently a 28-person, dedicated, loyal security team. The team works seven days on, seven days off rotation and is on duty 24 hours a day.

The team has received security training, and they conduct patrols, respond to calls, and are tasked with keeping peace in the community. The program has a very good and very strong working relationship with the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], and the two police services are in consistent contact.

People are still on edge after the stabbing attack on James Smith Cree Nation, but they do feel safer with the security service in place. While the work is tough and the journey is long, Eddie explained that they are already seeing a positive impact on the community through the work they have done.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing Eddie Head and the James Smith Cree Nation security force for their courageous work and their quick impacts they have already made in their community. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Riversdale.

Saskatoon Bike Shop Supports Bikes for Africa Campaign

Mr. Friesen: — It's another great day in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. Many of you know my passion for helping children, youth, and adults in need of a bicycle. I'm so happy to speak of another great initiative from a Saskatoon business. Saskatoon's own Bike Doctor is kicking off their second annual Bikes for Africa campaign. The goal of this drive is to raise money and send bikes to rural communities in Africa. Last year the Bikes for Africa campaign managed to send 800 bikes to people overseas, and this year a donor group is matching up to 40,000 in donations.

Mr. Speaker, these are not your average bicycles. These bikes are equipped to withstand long treks and designed to help in transporting necessities like food, water, and medical supplies. They also help in getting local kids to school, some of which must travel hours to get there.

Mr. Speaker, a bike can change someone's life forever. I have said this many times. For a child it really is freedom, freedom to be able to get to school, to work, and see friends. Most of us cannot even imagine not having a bike as a child, and it is such an amazing gift to see a child, who otherwise would not have the chance to go on their first ride, own their own bike.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the Legislative Assembly join me in thanking Bike Doctor and everyone who participates in the Bikes for Africa campaign. Thank you.

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

Couple Advocates for Wetlands Conservation Policy

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize Clint and Jody Blyth. Clint and Jody moved from Alberta onto a ranch in the Pipestone Creek area of Saskatchewan in 2008 and were shocked to learn that Saskatchewan doesn't have a wetland conservation policy — the only province in Canada without one.

Aware of the vital role that wetlands play in sustaining ranching and agricultural practices, Clint and Jody have become active proponents calling for wetland protection. In June, Clint spoke at the launch of the Saskatchewan Alliance for Water Sustainability letter-writing campaign and attended the news conference at the end of September when over 2,300 letters were delivered to the Premier and signed by Saskatchewan residents concerned about water and water quality in the province.

They've noticed that water quality appears to be declining in southeast Saskatchewan, but without any data, it's hard to know what's happening. Clint and Jody have watched as the banks on the stream that runs through their property erodes every year. As more water is illegally drained upstream, the banks overflow in the spring, flooding their downstream land.

Clint and Jody are true stewards of the land. Thank you for your hard work building awareness and joining the calls for a comprehensive wetland conservation policy for Saskatchewan.

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

Opening of New Affordable and Accessible Housing Units

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I joined community members to celebrate the opening of 10 new affordable and barrier-free units at NewRock Developments' Sage Meadows project in Saskatoon. Sage Meadows will provide affordable and barrier-free housing for four low-income families and six families needing barrier-free housing. Support services and tenant placement will be provided by Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we know that safe and affordable housing contributes to the health and well-being of people in our province. That is why the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation provided \$250,000 to NewRock Developments' Sage Meadows project for these 10 units through the Saskatchewan co-investment program. Through a cost-matching grant, the city of Saskatoon provided an additional \$250,000 and NewRock Developments also provided over \$85,000.

[14:00]

This project aligns with our government's work to address barriers to social housing to make sure the right housing is available in the right place and is available for people in the greatest housing need. I thank NewRock Developments for putting this vision into action and for their ongoing commitment to enhancing the quality of life for Saskatchewan families and communities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in recognizing NewRock Developments and Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan for their incredible work in our community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

National Physician Assistant Day

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 27th we celebrate National Physician Assistant Day in recognition of this profession and its positive impact on health care.

Physician assistants are highly skilled professionals who work alongside and under the supervision of physicians in a variety of settings and specialties. Our government has invested \$1.3 million in this year's budget to create physician assistant positions for the first time in our province. And for the first time, the University of Saskatchewan's College of Medicine is developing a two-year physician assistant master's program. The program will begin in the fall of 2025 and it can be customized for the unique needs of Saskatchewan's health care system.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring we have the health care professionals in place to provide essential health services for patients across the province. This addition to our health care teams will provide our health care professionals the ability to see more patients while maintaining a high quality of care.

As the newest members of team-based health care in Saskatchewan, we look forward to physician assistants making valuable contributions to timely, high-quality health care and enhancing patient access to health services in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Economic Indicators Reveal Saskatchewan Success

Mr. B. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's another great day in Saskatchewan. Actually I need to correct that. It's a fantastic day in Saskatchewan. Last week Statistics Canada showed once again that our province is leading the nation in trade.

Saskatchewan ranked first for retail trade growth for the month of September. Our retail trade grew by five times the national average — five times — to more than 2.1 billion over last month. Mr. Speaker, we're also leading the nation in GDP [gross domestic product] growth at 6 per cent, and the recent labour force survey shows that we have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada.

September also saw the province record an almost 15 per cent increase in housing starts year over year. And we continue to be a hub for international investment and development, thanks to this government's engagement strategies with the global economy, investment like BHP's 6.4 billion investment into the Jansen potash project.

Mr. Speaker, we won't be apologizing in this House for bringing home jobs and opportunities for Saskatchewan people. Part of our government's growth plan is to double the value of provincial exports by 2030, a goal that we are well on our way to achieving. We have the food, the fuel, and the fertilizer that our growing world needs. And regardless of what the opposition says, we will continue to engage with our international partners and tell the Saskatchewan story this year at COP28 [Conference of Parties 28]. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Before question period, I'd like to remind members that rule 20(2) requires that questions must be related to matters within the responsibility of government or matters related to individual ministerial authority. Also pursuant to rule 20(3), responses shall be relevant to the question. If questions contain extra matters in the preamble, this invites responses to the additional matters. Ministers may decline to answer, take notice, or respond as they see fit, provided they are in order and deal with the topic raised.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Management of Provincial Economy

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing to deliver when it comes to economic growth and fiscal management.

Bank of Montreal's most recent economic forecast for Saskatchewan forecasts economic growth at just over 1 per cent

for 2023 and less than 1 per cent for 2024. Under this Premier's watch, in three of the past five years the Saskatchewan economy has actually shrunk. And over the past five years the average annual economic growth has been at only 0.36 per cent per year.

When will this government admit that its economic strategy isn't working and finally listen to the people of this province on how to grow this economy?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — The Leader of the Opposition is referencing one of the most recent reports of Bank of Montreal economic report for the provinces across Canada. I think if she reads on she'll see that that report identifies Saskatchewan as leading the country in economic growth, Mr. Speaker. That's where this province is in report after report, not only for this year but out into next year, Mr. Speaker.

We're an export-based province, and this is a government that has focused on representing the Saskatchewan companies that are exporting to over 150 countries around the world, Mr. Speaker. For an example, next week we will be in Dubai allowing Saskatchewan companies to tell their story; not only of what they produce but how they produce the products that they do, some of the most sustainable products on earth, Mr. Speaker.

What this has resulted in — this concerted effort of providing the cleanest and most affordable food, fuel, and fertilizer to countries around the world, Mr. Speaker — has provided us with about a 40 per cent increase on our export value this past year. A record, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan's history, building on last year's export value which was also a record.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier doesn't like that report, I've got another one for him. The release of the mid-year financial report today confirms that once again this government has mismanaged our public finances. This Premier's record is now five deficits to one surplus, even though he promised balanced budgets. We've gone from a billion-dollar surplus to a \$250 million deficit, all while this tired and out-of-touch government continues to waste public tax dollars hand over fist — a million-dollar pavilion in Dubai, hundreds of millions of dollars wasted on the AIMS [administrative information management system] and Linkin systems and inflated hotel fees in the Ministry of Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, wasting public tax dollars is always a bad idea. How does this Premier justify it while he is also running a deficit?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the fiscal report that was provided today by our Deputy Premier, the Minister of Finance, there's really four areas where the revenues and the expenses on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan changed.

First is firefighting, Mr. Speaker, was up over what is an average year, which is what we budget for. Second is the teachers' pension plan, also up, Mr. Speaker, an accounting number most certainly. Potash royalties have changed, potash royalties that the

members opposite were banking on with the multiple commitments that they had made, Mr. Speaker, a total of about \$2.7 billion worth of commitments.

But largely, largely, Mr. Speaker, we continue to have — for the second and in some areas third year — a drought in the southwestern portion of this province. \$853 million, prepaid dollars within the Crop Insurance Fund, was provided to farmers in this province, Mr. Speaker. That needs to be accounted for.

Mr. Speaker, the question that I have is that this is a government that is following the crop insurance regulations that we have in providing those dollars to farmers. Mr. Speaker, would the members opposite not support farmers, not provide that \$853 million, Mr. Speaker, like they did with the GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] contracts a couple of decades ago?

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, you can tell how desperate that Premier is by how many decades he reaches back for his response.

Now this tired and out-of-touch government continues to mismanage our provincial finances. Taxpayer-supported debt is now going to increase, Mr. Speaker, by \$800 million this year, all while this Premier sticks to the line that he's paying down \$1 billion in debt. Mr. Speaker, it's a shell game. It states right in their own mid-year report that the taxpayer-supported debt is increasing by \$800 million.

Will that Premier come clean and admit the total government debt has now reached its highest level in the history of this province, over \$30 billion?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last two years, it has been this government that paid down two and a half billion dollars in debt in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Two and a half billion dollars, this government paid down, versus day after day in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, members opposite standing up and calling for the government to spend that — what do they call? — record windfall dollars, Mr. Speaker. Spend that record windfall dollars here, spend that record windfall dollars there to the tune of \$2.7 billion, Mr. Speaker. Two and a half billion dollars paid down on a deficit, saving us over a \$100 million annually in interest, Mr. Speaker.

Under the NDP we would still have that \$100 million annually in interest. We'd have to rewrite that at today's rates, which have tripled, Mr. Speaker, and we would have baked that \$2.7 billion in year after year after year, Mr. Speaker. That's the record of the NDP when they're in government. That's the record of what the NDP would do if they ever got back into government, Mr. Speaker, versus a province today that has the second-lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the nation of Canada.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — You know, that tax-and-squander Premier just needs to open up page 11 of his report and the graph will make it simple. The debt, Mr. Speaker, is going like this, Mr. Speaker.

You know, when the budget was released in March, many shared concerns with respect to the revenue forecast for potash. Here we are only six months later, and now we find that this Finance minister and that Premier was off by 40 per cent. This tired and out-of-touch government projected a billion-dollar surplus. Now it's a \$250 million deficit.

After being so dramatically wrong on the budget once again, they want us to trust them with their plan to create a costly Saskatchewan revenue agency, a costly and bureaucratic plan to put this government in charge of collecting corporate taxes, all while costing tens of millions of dollars more for taxpayers and local businesses in Saskatchewan.

With their tax-and-squander record of mismanaging the budget, why should Saskatchewan people trust them on collecting corporate . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Well rather than explain all of the spending that the NDP have asked for and how they're going to actually find the money for it, they want to talk about a revenue agency that isn't even in this budget. We are having a consultation process. They put a price tag on it. It's their price tag; it's not ours. But that is how desperate they are to find something that they want to cut when it's not even there to cut, Mr. Speaker.

I want them to explain why they call the crop insurance — where we stand, pay out — that we stand up for producers, why they call that mismanagement, Mr. Speaker? Would they not stand up for our producers?

Why do they criticize the potash projections when he knows full well we get that from the industry? The industry does our projections. Is he saying that they're mismanaging their money, that they're irresponsible, Mr. Speaker? He knows where we get our information.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — You know, Mr. Speaker, that tax-and-squander government knows full well that we've been calling for tax relief, Mr. Speaker, not more and more taxes and hurting our economies and households.

The budget materials released today also confirm what the public already knows. The job creation rate in Saskatchewan is well below the Canadian average, the Canadian average rate by more than 40 per cent. We're less that rate by 40 per cent.

Our inflation rate is higher than that of Canada and made so much worse by the actions of this government: the taxes and the utility rate hikes that they've imposed on Saskatchewan people. Saskatchewan had the highest increase in electrical rates year to year from 2022 to this last year according to Statistics Canada.

When will this government wake up to the reality that their mismanagement and choices are driving up inflation and the cost of living for hard-working Saskatchewan families?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well a lot in that question, Mr. Speaker, but let's start with jobs. The lowest unemployment rate in the entire country is here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Nineteen thousand jobs created last year alone, Mr. Speaker. The unemployment rate of 4.4 per cent; the national rate, Mr. Speaker, is at 5.7 per cent. And today, Mr. Speaker, a really exciting announcement to keep that momentum going: an \$80 million contribution to the Saskatchewan Research Council, an investment in a microreactor project that could have profound benefits for this province and around the world.

[14:15]

And what do we hear from the NDP, Mr. Speaker? Criticism, saying you should never do that, Mr. Speaker. We believe that they're wrong on that project, just like we know they're wrong on jobs, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The question wasn't answered. Just a whole bunch of spin from the minister. The question that is always asked at a time like this is, could our present financial situation, could it have been avoided? The answer of course is yes, if this government would quit its waste and mismanagement, quit the extravagant travel around the world with a cool million dollars on a pavilion in Dubai, quit the mismanagement of IT [information technology] projects and their runaway costs, quit wasting on their costly projects like the marshals and the Sask revenue agency, quit the billions on mismanaged and outsourced projects like the bypass and the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] land scandal. The list really goes on and on.

Instead of driving up debt and driving up costs for Saskatchewan people, why won't the Sask Party just quit mismanaging the hard-earned dollars of Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Again very interesting that the NDP make a list of one-time spend, which is capital expenditures, and they would bake it into ongoing operating costs, Mr. Speaker. That's the point we've been making. You cannot take one-time revenue and bake it into ongoing operating costs.

Those members opposite would have us go back to a paper system, filing cabinets of children in our care. That is what is irresponsible. They would not have put in an IT system because there was none in place when the NDP were in power. It was paper files in paper filing cabinets. We could track a library book better when the NDP were in power than we could track our children in care. Somehow they have magical free IT systems. They would be doing payroll by hand, Mr. Speaker, without having an IT system. That's what will take us right back to the days of the NDP.

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

Health Care Staffing

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is wasting dollars hand over fist, dollars that should be going to health care and education. Unfortunately we see that every day in our hospitals with the overreliance on contract nurses. Because this government has allowed chronic short-staffing to become the norm, contract nurses have to be brought in to fill the gaps. These nurses cost way more per hour than actually employing regular, full-time nurses. It makes no sense. And nurses tell me it's costing our province \$100 million a year.

Why is this government wasting so much money in this way? Why not just hire more registered nurses?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to begin by thanking all of our health care workers, thanking our nurses that are working across this province in our major centres and our rural and remote communities as well to take care of residents right across this province, Mr. Speaker.

And I would say this: we in Saskatchewan and other provinces as well utilize contract nurses when necessary to make sure that we can keep services operating as they should, Mr. Speaker. But ultimately what we are working to do, Mr. Speaker, is to hire more nurses, bring more nurses and other health care workers into our health care system. Such as, as I described earlier this afternoon, how since December of last year we have hired 870 new nursing graduates that are coming into our hospitals and our long-term care facilities right across this province, Mr. Speaker.

And we're going to continue to do that, to train nurses here in Saskatchewan to work in Saskatchewan facilities, to continue to build upon and enhance the health care that we have right across this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, there's a time and a place for these stopgap measures. But the fact is that under this tired and out-of-touch government these measures are becoming the norm. Nurses today are protesting outside of St. Paul's Hospital, calling for action to end the chronic short-staffing, to end the fire code violations for overcrowding, and to start treating health care workers with the respect that they deserve.

When will we see some action? When will we see an end to the chronic short-staffing in Saskatchewan hospitals?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Health minister.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nearly 18,000 nurses of all designations call Saskatchewan home, Mr. Speaker. And some of them are here, joined us here today: Saskatchewan-trained health care workers and nurses and those that have come from outside of our borders as well, Mr. Speaker.

As I said earlier today, we have had a significant number of nurses come from other countries such as the Philippines, Mr. Speaker, where, as I said earlier, we now have 410 offers of support that have been extended to Filipino nurses as part of last fall's recruitment mission. Mr. Speaker, 185 are currently enrolled in training and 90 of those have arrived and are participating in their clinical portions of their training right now, Mr. Speaker, and will be working in health care facilities right across this province once they are licensed.

This is how we are continuing to build upon what it is that we are doing for health care in this province as part of our four-point action plan to recruit, train, incentivize, and retain health care workers, as announced in September of last year, Mr. Speaker, with significant success, acknowledging that we still have challenges to address. We're committed to addressing those challenges.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, day after day the minister gets up and acts like he's got everything under control. The fact is, if this government had anything under control, we wouldn't have health care workers protesting outside hospitals today. And we wouldn't have doctors, we wouldn't have doctors going out to Twitter to tell us it's taking six months for patients to get booked for a mammogram, and we wouldn't have fire code violations in our emergency rooms, and we wouldn't have more than 1,000 times when no ambulance was available when someone called for one. This is the record of this tired and out-of-touch government on health care.

When will the Sask Party take any responsibility for the failures that they've caused in our health system?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government takes very seriously the investments we are making into health care in this province. Provinces right across Canada, Mr. Speaker, are facing challenges in that regard, which is why we have made significant, significant investments into health care recruitment and retention and also training to bring more staff into our facilities, Mr. Speaker. To also increase capacity in our facilities, physical capacity — adding more beds, more hospitals, more long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker — that we are continuing to invest in to make sure that we have this capacity built into our system not only to address the pressures we face today, but also to build into the future to make sure that we're having more beds available, Mr. Speaker.

And with respect to some of the pressures that we're facing right now when it comes to wait times for breast cancer biopsies and diagnostics, we'll be making an announcement a little bit later this week on some short-term measures to address those wait lists.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Provision of Housing for Seniors

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is failing spectacularly on the housing file from beginning to end. And while serious questions have been raised about inflated rates at hotels paid out to government MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]-owned hotels, there's still the matter of the 600 million this government is wasting on the vacant housing across this province, and the nearly 200 million of wasted utilities, forgone rent, and taxes on those empty units.

Homelessness has hit a shameless high-water mark in all of our communities. Meanwhile vacancy rates have jumped from 6 per cent in 2012 to 18 per cent 10 years later in 2022, the increase in seniors vacancies during that time up over 1,000 per cent. Mr. Speaker, this government has cut funding to public housing to the tune of hundreds of millions, and it's seniors who are getting a raw deal.

What does the minister say to seniors who say they can't count on public housing as a safe and affordable option for them anymore?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, we've been over this before in terms of the \$600 million figure the member referenced, said in her question. Replacement costs is not the same as present value. It's not what it's worth, Mr. Speaker, going forward.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Housing Corporation works hard to ensure that units are brought back onto line. We've had several announcements. The member from Saskatoon Southeast just talked about more units coming online for those in seniors' units, Mr. Speaker, those who are most vulnerable or need a place to stay, Mr. Speaker.

We're working very hard to turn over units in the existing landscape, Mr. Speaker. We're increasing the number of units available, well over 300 that are being constructed as we speak, Mr. Speaker. And we're working hard to turn over those that, where we need to get them to rent-ready so people can use them, Mr. Speaker, and have that affordable units available to them.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, if the minister has an issue with that 600 million figure, I invite him to find his feet and tell me how many hundreds of millions he thinks we're wasting on those empty units.

Mr. Speaker, no one is struggling more today than seniors who have to survive on a fixed income, and they have been badly impacted by the Sask Party's housing cuts and failure to step in with cost-of-living relief.

Today we're joined by three seniors from the High Park Towers in Moose Jaw. They're here to share harrowing stories of their experience in Sask Housing units. They feel abandoned by this government after their safe and affordable seniors' housing has become anything but — a lack of maintenance, cockroaches,

long delays in basic repairs. In High Park Towers they now lock the door and turn off the intercom at 8 p.m., leaving these folks feel like they're in "jail," isolated and cut off from their loved ones.

What does the minister have to say to the seniors who've been so badly failed by this Sask Party government?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, in terms of vacancies we are working very hard to fill those through programs, such as north central Regina having a fixed-rate rent. And that is seeing some success, Mr. Speaker. We're looking to turn over units as quickly as we can. Sometimes there is challenges finding contractors to be able to bring those back online, Mr. Speaker. I know in Regina here there are seniors' high-rises that do have vacancies, Mr. Speaker, and we want to continue to work on those in certain areas of the city of Regina to be able to fill those, Mr. Speaker.

We do spend well north of \$70 million on maintenance and improvements to be able to bring units offline back online as well as continued maintenance, Mr. Speaker. It's a good option. Rent geared to income is very affordable in most of the units that we have. They're social housing units and we want to continue to make those available, Mr. Speaker, in terms of keeping them up to date and keeping them safe and warm for people to be able to use them.

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

Ms. Conway: — Wow, Mr. Speaker. Don't take it from me, take it from these folks who have trekked here to their Legislative Assembly to share these concerns. They report regularly finding needles in the stairway, people sleeping in the laundry room, regularly finding feces in the elevator, addiction and mental health episodes spilling out into common areas.

They recognize all people deserve to be housed and supported, but this government is trying to address the many crises in housing of their creation by throwing everyone in without any help, without any thought, and without any support, Mr. Speaker. And it's not working. Seniors are moving out in large numbers, and the residents here don't feel safe or heard.

Will the minister agree to meet with these seniors today and commit to fixing the problems in seniors' housing today?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — In terms of meeting with individuals, I'd be happy to listen to and address their concerns as we go forward, Mr. Speaker. Of course we want to have a secure place. In many instances there is security and if needed, we have moved on putting security into buildings where there has been incidents and challenges in the past. So we can certainly look at that, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of support for seniors, our government's been able to increase the seniors' income plan several times over our term in government, Mr. Speaker. We quadrupled it. The personal care

home benefit has increased in this most recent budget.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a ministry just in charge of seniors to help in that situation, but we're going to continue to work to bring more units online. We have had some success in our major centres in terms of filling those vacant units, Mr. Speaker. Those are down in all of our three major centres, so we want to continue to find safe and affordable units for everyone, including our seniors.

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

Addressing Intimate Partner Violence

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, last week Statistics Canada released its latest numbers on intimate partner violence in the country.

In 2022 in Saskatchewan 7,200 people were victims of intimate partner violence. We're worst in the nation — just like last year, just like the year before. That Sask Party government pats itself on the back for finally offering operational funding for second-stage shelters, the second-last province in the country to do so and after years of pushing from those on the front line and the opposition.

[14:30]

What is the minister doing to actually bring down intimate partner violence rates in Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To begin with, Mr. Speaker, last week we introduced *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act*, which follows on Acts along that line in previous years, Mr. Speaker, as part of an effort by government to get to the cause of this grave, grave issue and address it.

It is a complex one, Mr. Speaker, but \$27.5 million is what this government has invested and is investing this year in addressing interpersonal violence in all aspects. That covers funding for sexual assault providers, counsellors, transportation. A second-stage housing is referenced on the capital side and on the operations side. In past months we have announced efforts in that regard for the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] in Regina and the YWCA in Saskatoon, in P.A., Mr. Speaker. All aspects are being addressed through the commitment by this government to . . .

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

TABLING OF SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Before orders of the day, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to submit supplementary estimates accompanied by a message from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — Would you please rise for the message from the Lieutenant Governor. The message is as follows:

The Lieutenant Governor transmits supplementary estimates no. 1 of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 2024 and recommends the same in the Legislative Assembly.

His Honour, the Honourable Russell B. Mirasty, Lieutenant Governor, province of Saskatchewan.

Please be seated.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

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 rise today to move second reading of *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act, 2023*.

At its root, human trafficking is about exploitation for financial gain. Perpetrators exercise control over their victims in any number of ways, including financial control. One source of that financial control for human traffickers is coerced debts which come about when a trafficker forces a victim to take out a loan or incur other debt for the trafficker's benefit, which of course increases the victim's financial dependency on the trafficker. This significantly limits a victim's ability to escape an abusive situation. It also re-victimizes those who have courageously managed to escape traffickers by preventing them from borrowing funds because of debts incurred while they were victims.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is about providing victims with more options to rebuild their lives. It will prohibit lenders from taking the existence of coerced debts into account when making a lending determination, and credit reporting agencies also no longer will be able to include information about coerced debts in credit reports.

To that end, this bill will create a certification process to validate a victim's information. The certification process will be overseen by victim services in the Ministry of Justice, and can also include information garnered by police officers and shelters.

Applications for certification will be able to be made by a victim of human trafficking or someone acting on their behalf. Applications will then be reviewed by victim services, and once approved, the certificate provided to relevant credit reporting agencies. And, Mr. Speaker, this process is modelled on the existing process in *The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Act* for victims of interpersonal violence seeking to end a fixed-term tenancy.

Finally the bill adds to existing remedies currently available to

victims of human trafficking by explicitly allowing them to make a claim against their perpetrator for the recovery of money or property obtained as a result of a coerced debt.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that human trafficking is a complex problem that requires a multi-levelled and multi-layered solution. This bill will help sever the strings of financial dependency between victims of trafficking and their traffickers, and we will continue our work through other avenues to also assist trafficking victims.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Protection from Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act, 2023*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 152 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina University.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. An important piece of legislation before the House today, Bill 152. The minister has spoken to the scourge of human trafficking and the impact that it has in all of our communities and especially upon the victims of human trafficking. In addition to financial coercion, for the victims of human trafficking the most significant currency is fear, Mr. Speaker, the fear that these people live with obviously through their experiences in trafficking as well as while trying to rebuild their lives.

The opposition, Mr. Speaker, we support these efforts to mitigate the ongoing financial control of coerced debts and other forms of financial abuse that these victims suffer from. And of course we support anything looking at increasing support for victims and the financial liberation that they need to continue to rebuild their lives in all aspects, Mr. Speaker.

The minister spoke of the additional options that are contemplated in this bill and the impacts, that this will help in terms of the standards and the credit reporting agencies that will be worked with in order to help address some of the horrifying repercussions of human trafficking on these victims, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of the opposition, of course we support anything that can be done to help these individuals rebuild their lives because, as was said even today in this Assembly, with 7,200 victims of interpersonal and intimate partner violence here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, this is an area where we must do better.

As this bill progresses through debate, I know that the critic will be doing the good work of engaging with stakeholder organizations and speaking to those who have experiences with this at a deep level as well as the many good people out there in the community doing this work. I know there will be additional comments put on the record, Mr. Speaker. And with that I move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 152.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 138

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

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

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure and honour to be a part of the debate of Bill 138, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2023*. Mr. Speaker, we know that people who are working in firefighters' department, they are doing incredible job.

I can share one of the stories. One of my friends about six, seven years ago, he was living in an apartment building and all of a sudden they got a fire in the apartment building. He came out from the apartment building to looking what's going on outside when he saw that the apartment building was caught by fire. His wife was inside and he was getting into the apartment building to rescue her, wife, or to bring her, wife, out of this building.

One of the firefighters stopped this person there, my friend, said "You're not supposed to get into the building. That is not your job. It is my job. I have to get into the building and I have to rescue your wife. It's my job."

So people, they are doing such a great job that they're putting their life at risk, their children at risk. And they are coming up to protection of all lives and the lives of others. They are doing an incredible job. No doubt about that.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we're going along with that, we are getting through a lot of things that what they are facing long-term, short-term, what impact on their health will be, whether that will be mentally, that will be physically as well. Here in the bill it's adding new six types of cancers that's been affecting them at the workplace. We definitely can't deny them. We have to support our front-line workers to make sure that they should have protection by all respect. And along with them, we make sure we have to look to the other areas as well.

We have front-line workers like order of nurses, doctors. In pandemic we saw that very clearly. When people were getting into the hospital, they were not allowing you, that you're at risk, but we can take that risk. They were staying in the hallway. They were treating our loved ones. We have to make sure that we have to look into that as well.

So make sure when we're supporting anything, we should have to look all the areas, that how further effects will be on other departments as well. In here I can see in the bill that is saying that remove mandatory coverage from WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] executive officers. I will say that people who are not working on the ground, they are not in the field, those

people will obviously will be not having those kind of diseases as well because they are not at the work at risk.

But again we make sure we have to look into that as well that what will be the consequences of that. If we are removing executives from that bill that means that we will be losing our leadership. People will be not attracted over here with good perks, with good affordability of things over there that they can be covered. If they're not being protected, less attraction will be there, and we'll be missing one of the big chunks of the leadership that will be not having that.

There are debates about other presumptive cancers that could be added into other front-line workers. I gave an example of the health care workers as well that we should not be ignoring those doctors, those nurses, and those health care workers in our hallways in the hospital.

So here is one other question as well. Do the wildfire fighters will be covered in that one or not? So we make sure that they are doing the same kind of job. They're exposed to the same hazards, the same kind of dangerous environment as well that would be impacted as well. So make sure we are not taking away from that incentive as well or for this opportunity as well.

Mr. Speaker, we have a question about some other changes included in the bill that are not related to the presumptive cancer coverage as well. This bill will change the definition of "workers" to remove executive officers. Why is this being changed? And the indexing of the permanent functional impairment award and the independence allowances, how do these figures compare with other jurisdictions? We'll make sure whatever we're doing, we have to look to the other provinces as well what they're doing, what their line of action is on that perspective.

Are we providing more or less than other provinces? How will the indexing affect the number over time? Is that the right way to adjust for the year-to-year cost changes? We will be consulting with the stakeholders, with the people in the profession to make sure whatever we're amending, we make sure that we can accommodate all the stakeholders, all the experts, all the people that they're working, they have knowledge, so we can consult them on that. So the critic for this WCB amendment will be having discussion with those stakeholders and will be getting back with their feedback and their thoughts.

With this, I will adjourn the debate for today on Bill 138, workers' compensation amendment, 2023. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 138. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

[14:45]

Bill No. 140

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 140 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to join in on adjourned debates on Bill 140, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2023*. Just looking at some of the comments on here and some of the legislation that the government is proposing to repeal. I know sometimes we talk about it as housecleaning, but some of these bills, I was going back looking at some of the notes and some of them are 1920.

And for whatever reasons, I'm hoping and we always hope that the government obviously is consulting. I know the critics will make sure, you know, individuals are consulted when legislation comes before this House. But also I guess when there's changes being proposed or repealed, we hope that, you know, they're coming . . . Either someone's brought them to the attention of the government or for some reason staff, somebody has brought them to the attention of the government that they have to repeal legislations. And hopefully they're going to come up with new legislation.

And one I could give them a suggestion on, the meaningful duty-to-consult and accommodate First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan residents. There's one where I would like to recommend they could do, where it would have some teeth in it.

But I'm just giving examples as they repeal some. And I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, government will come with more legislation. It's just an idea I would like to share with them and hopefully maybe the Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis would be able to bring such legislation forward on behalf of the good people as minister he's supposed to represent. So I'll wait for that.

But at this point I have, you know, not much more to say about repealing the legislation and I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill 140 at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 140. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 142

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

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

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to join in again on adjourned debates on Bill 142, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Utility Line Locates) Amendment Act, 2023*. Again this

left some changes. And again our Crown corporations, whether it's SaskTel, SaskPower, SaskEnergy, obviously find their lines on people's residence in our province. You know that they do a lot of good work, and I want to give credit to our utility companies that are owned by the province and by the good people. They do lots of good work.

And it's about safety, and I think not knowing that, you know . . . And I know our critic will ask some questions and have the ability to ask why they're changing from the 48 hours to three days. There must be good reasons. And I know it's giving notice that when somebody wants to have their lines located, it used to be, from what I'm getting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48 hours. It's now going to be moved to three days' notice for that request to come in to have access to where SaskPower, Sask Energy . . .

So I think they're working together, and hopefully in this thing our Crown corporations work together. And maybe that's where some of this will take us and where they're going to coordinate and work together. And that's always good when our Crown corporations can work together to serve the residents that truly own it and customers that they take care of.

I don't know if I have a lot more to say about this legislation. I know the critic will ask some questions, get some feedback. Obviously there's a reason why. And we'll find out, you know, if this legislation is the right way. Is it enough time? I know the critic will do that. And at the end of the day, you know, that's what we're asked to do.

And in this case I think again we'll allow that process to happen, and we'll let the legislation do what it needs to do. And hopefully they've consulted with everyone that needs to be consulted with, and hopefully this is good legislation, makes sense. It's about safety. And we always want to make sure our residents are safe and our workers are safe, to make sure they're taken care of with timely notices.

On that point I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill 142, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Utility Line Locates) Amendment Act, 2023*, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 142. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 143

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

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

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure and honour to be part of Bill 143 for debate, *The Child Care Amendment Act, 2023*. Mr. Speaker, child care is one of the growing issues and concerns of most of the parents when I was,

back in 2020, in election at the doorstep, and I was at the doorstep in 2023 by-election as well. Most of the people raised this issue and concerns, and it is one of the genuine ones. And we have to make sure whatever amendment we're making, we're doing, we have to keep in mind that people of this class, working people, especially in my community, to make sure we are not affecting them. We can effectively do something for them, that we have plenty of care centres as well.

And a few things that I observed, that some of the care homes, they are paying minimum wages to the people who are working in the daycare. And people coming on and off because of the lowest minimum wage in our province, that is one of the biggest concerns. If we can have a very reasonable amount of minimum wage to the people who work in daycare, they will stay for longer, and the owners will operate their care homes for longer times. There will be no disruption. And this disruption always . . . [inaudible] . . . lack of places, lack of accommodating communities and children. And parents, those that are working, they always need someplace for their kids to stay there with their peace of mind. And we have to make sure we have to look into that as well.

I know that there's a lot of things we can do, but make sure that when we are talking about, obviously we have to have a board of directors. As it says in the bill and amendment, that we have to put them, parents as well, in the consultation as well. I totally agree with that. If parents of the daycare, they are also part of the board, they will make very good decisions. And that will bring the genuine issues on the agenda as well, which is highly appreciated for that as well.

But we make sure we have to be not making such strict rules and regulations where people are staying away from this business. As we know, our province is growing. If we have growing, we have to retain people as well. For retention we make sure we have to have good daycare centres in multiple places, closer to the people where they can reach, they can drop. They're not driving back and forth. So we have to make sure that when we're making, we should not be making the amendment so strict so the people cannot get into the business. So here I can see, cannot reapply for one year. Obviously it's case to case if something happened or any problem happened. And if we are removing their certification, we are telling them to not work for one year. For me I think it will be case to case what happened.

And we make sure we have to be looking into that. And the minister's department, they have to look into that so they can address accordingly what's happening. Must pay the fee, do training, and correct all finances, and make sure that requirement to do — obviously they have to do all that with that. The minister can refuse you a new one in the public interest if . . . well I will say, it's again case to case. Make sure it should not be a small thing that people are being deserted and closing their daycare. Closing of one daycare will affect . . . the burden will go to another one and another one. It will be impacting a lot, so we make sure we have to look into that.

Letting the centres operate multiple facilities does not cover the issue that there are just not enough workers. Here in the bill it says it should be not in multiple places. If they are providing very good services and they can do it, one branch very well, and they are increasing their businesses with good standing, I think there

should be no issue with that.

So our critic for this bill on 143, the child care amendment, will look and will be having a lot of consultation with those people who are in this business, the stakeholders, the parents, to make sure whatever amendment we're doing it should be appropriate and make sure that we are not — I should say the appropriate word — that we are not discouraging people in this business, Mr. Speaker.

With that I will be adjourning the debate on Bill 143 and our critic will be looking into that and will address on that. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of Bill No. 143. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to agree?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 144

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Merriman that **Bill No. 144 — *The Police (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A pleasure to enter in briefly on Bill No. 144, *The Police (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, a number of my colleagues have canvassed this bill already and I don't want to go over the ground that so many of them have covered so eloquently. But I think it's fair to say in Bill No. 144, what we see here is just another example of misplaced priorities, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, here in Saskatchewan crime is unfortunately an ongoing and ever-increasing concern. We hear this from municipalities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We hear this from the victims of crime. We hear this from those on the front lines and community-based organizations. We hear this from those in policing. We hear this from SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities]. We hear this from SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association]. We hear this from those who work in the fields of mental health, addiction. We hear this from the small-business community, Mr. Speaker.

And I am going to come back to that, but I really want to talk about this bill as it relates to the establishment of the Saskatchewan marshals service. Again, not something that this government ran on in the last election, not something that they have been straight about in terms of a priority that was coming loud and clear from the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. It may have been coming loud and clear from Danielle Smith next door in Alberta.

But regardless of where you go, Mr. Speaker, you do not hear this as something vocally supported by anyone except members opposite, Mr. Speaker. Policing agencies do not think this is the

right place to put \$20 million just in start-up costs, Mr. Speaker. You talk to SUMA. You talk to SARM, Mr. Speaker. I know members opposite get horrified when anyone but them talks about SARM. Also organizations that do not believe that this is the right place to put \$20 million in just start-up costs. Now that's a heck of a lot of money, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I don't think there's anyone who thinks that \$20 million is going to be the full cost for the Saskatchewan marshals service even in start-up costs, Mr. Speaker. And again, that's a heck of a lot of money.

So you know, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite like to say, oh it's the no-plan NDP. Well we've got actually a plan on this, Mr. Speaker, and that plan came from consultation with stakeholders like SARM, like SUMA, in policing, in Justice, in community-based organizations. You know what we're proposing, Mr. Deputy Speaker: \$10 million to existing policing forces in the province, to working with those efficiencies, working with those organizations that already exist and are doing good and necessary work; and another \$10 million, Mr. Speaker, to put into the root causes of crime. Because as the Leader of the Official Opposition has said, yes, we need to be tough on crime, and we need to be tough on the root causes of crime, Mr. Speaker, because this is something that is unfortunately, unfortunately continuing to be a challenge here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We're talking about it on the side of the official opposition. The member from Saskatchewan Rivers is talking about it, Mr. Speaker. And not because anybody wants to, you know, to fete the increase in crime here in Saskatchewan, but this is an issue that needs real attention. It needs real solutions because it is an issue that is increasing and it is increasing in severity, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So let's talk about this. Let's talk about what it looks like. And you know, members opposite like to talk about their record, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So in 2018, if we look at the crime severity index, that rate was 141.3. And what was it last year, Mr. Speaker, the last year that it was reported? 190.31. That is a significant increase, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[15:00]

Serious crime in Saskatchewan is on the rise for the third straight year. And in 2022, again the last year that reporting is available, we had the most homicides in Saskatchewan in 61 years. Not the 16 years that the members opposite like to talk about, but in 61 years it's the highest homicide rate, Mr. Speaker. And that is something that should concern all members, especially those tasked with the great privilege of forming government in order to better this province, Mr. Speaker.

And they're woo-ing each other. They're woo-ing themselves over there. I'm not sure if they're actually listening to the subject matter. Perhaps you wouldn't be acting like woo girls over there . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's not just . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . A woo girl. A woo girl, Mr. Speaker. I've been asked to explain, and I will do that, with apologies to Hansard. A woo girl is somebody who is always down for a good time and just goes "woo," much like members opposite.

So, Mr. Speaker, let's talk a little bit about some of the other reasons beyond violent crime, beyond what this means for our society, beyond what this means for our province, Mr. Speaker.

Because aside from all of the moral and ethical reasons that we should care about what rising crime in Saskatchewan means, besides the personal economic costs that are too often borne by the victims of that crime, whether it's property or violent or otherwise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's talk about the impact on Saskatchewan's economy.

Just last week the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce put out their small business, their SME [small to medium enterprises] confidence barometer. And what is contained in there, Mr. Speaker, but a very interesting and unfortunate note that 38 per cent of those surveyed of small and medium businesses in the greater Saskatoon area had incurred increased expenses as a result of crime or in the prevention of crime and property damage, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's not just the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce.

The CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] reported just this month that rising crime weighs heavily with those in the small-business sector, Mr. Speaker. And this isn't just brick-and-mortar, mom-and-pop shops, Mr. Speaker. It is a diverse membership that includes people across the province — rural Saskatchewan, urban Saskatchewan, you know, those in agribusiness. It is quite a diverse membership, Mr. Speaker. It's beyond your traditional downtowns and main streets.

But I think it's fair to say that those are suffering and suffering significantly because two-fifths of those surveyed — two in five — report being impacted directly or indirectly by crime, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with 59 per cent worried about the safety of their customers and their employees. And this is a real concern, Mr. Speaker.

You know, just today the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre spoke about some of those outcomes of crime, of poverty, of mental health and addictions, what we're seeing in some of our seniors' housing, Mr. Speaker. And we're seeing this in our downtowns. We're seeing this in our main streets. We're seeing this across the province, Mr. Speaker. And what we see is a government that has given up on addressing this. They've given up on helping people recover, of keeping families together, Mr. Speaker.

And it's not that there are simple solutions to this, Mr. Speaker. Nobody thinks that there are simple solutions to addressing the causes of crime. But I can tell you something pretty straightforward, Mr. Deputy Speaker: \$20 million for the establishment of a vanity marshals service is not going to reduce crime severity. It's not going to reduce the impact that these small businesses are feeling, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's fair to say that this government needs to take it seriously and they need to also take seriously the causes of this — mental health, addictions, Mr. Speaker. It's not just the opposition who's talking about this; it's leaders in policing, Mr. Speaker.

You know, in looking at this, Mr. Speaker, I looked at what some of our police chiefs have said and I'd like to . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker — Why is the member on her feet?

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — What is your point of order?

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina University has called members on this side of the House “woo girls.” There are rules referring to members in this Assembly, and they should be referred to in a parliamentary manner, Mr. Speaker. I would argue and I would assert that this is not parliamentary. I would ask that the member opposite withdraw and apologize, please.

The Deputy Speaker: — I would ask the member to withdraw and apologize.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I withdraw and apologize. Thank you.

Okay, so I will, Mr. Speaker, continue briefly. And I'll quote from I believe the former chief of police in Saskatoon, who said that, and I quote:

We think the direction forward and the way to most appropriately address it is with those partnerships and not just with policing. We consider it certainly a public safety concern, but it's a concern that requires supports from Health and Social Services for a solution.

Mr. Speaker, and that's of course speaking of the increases in violent crime and calls related to addictions and homelessness and mental health, Mr. Speaker.

You know, covered a lot of ground and there's a few more bills to get through, so I think it's safe to say that there will be additional comments put on the record in regards to the misplaced priorities represented by this force and the \$20 million to accompany that, Mr. Speaker. And with that I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 144.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 144. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 145

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 145 — *The Funeral and Cremation Services (Legal Decision-Maker Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This will be my first of three bills to debate this afternoon in the Assembly. And you know, I'm actually quite happy to be up on this one, Bill No. 145, the funeral and cremation services amendment Act of 2023 because this is something that members on this side advocated for.

And I think it's one of the things that, you know, sometimes when we maybe write letters to a minister in a critic area related to maybe casework, something that's come to our attention from one of our constituents, you know, something that members of

this Assembly do all the time. But in this case, I'm sure that for my colleague from Douglas Park as well as my colleague from Regina University, that this was quite a difficult case that came to their attention, the kind of thing that, you know, can weigh heavy on us and the work that we do. In the instance where a young person, I think an 18-year-old, a young person passed away and it created some awareness for my colleagues in terms of the legal ramifications that that meant related to family law and parents who were no longer together, which is a reality.

You know, I've shared with this Assembly before that I grew up raised by a single parent. I've got a great relationship with both my mom and my dad nowadays, but there were a lot of years where I didn't see much of my dad growing up. And that's a reality for a lot of young people, raised in families like the one that I was raised in. And sometimes there's situations where those parents don't have a good relationship and they don't see eye to eye.

And while I can't imagine ever losing a child, the incredible pain and grief that would come with that, I also equally can't imagine the situation that my colleagues found themselves in, supporting this constituent who had lost their son, and then there was the disagreement about who would have decision-making ability. And so they brought this to the attention of the government through a letter, I believe. There's a little bit of history here that does demonstrate the ability that we have to work together, even on difficult files.

And so I am happy to be talking about this today because it led to meaningful change in these amendments, changing the language from "parent" or "legal custodian," that that's being replaced with the language of the "legal decision-maker" to acknowledge who is in the rightful place with that individual at the time of their passing.

I think in the past it was deferred to whoever the older individual was, and that just doesn't make any sense when it comes to family matters. And so I am happy to see this attention being paid here to this detail that the, I think we can say injustice that was exposed here that is being corrected and the wrong that's being righted through these changes, that I obviously support. So that's a good thing to see.

I do have some questions as far as other changes in these amendments, in terms of eliminating the term limits for members of the Funeral and Cremation Services Council. I'll be very honest, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm not aware of what that council does or what duties they carry out, so I'm going to continue to listen to my colleagues and the lead critic on this file to examine what the implications of that amendment might be. That it's not something that I'm aware of today, but certainly as one of the changes in these amendments, something that deserves some scrutiny. And I'm sure that that is supported by concerned stakeholders and individuals. But at this time I will conclude my remarks and move that we adjourn debate on Bill 145.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 145. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 146

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 146 — *The King's Bench Consequential Amendments Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll be very quick with this one, Bill 146, *The King's Bench Consequential Amendments Act*. It's housekeeping, just replacing references to Queen's Bench with King's Bench. We're seeing a lot of these changes, updating, which is just a good reminder of our history and our parliamentary democracy in terms of replacing this language in our legislation. And I imagine there'll be more of this to come.

So there's not much to say I think, just regular housekeeping changes that need to be done and this is the right way to do it. So with that I'll voice my support for this, but looking forward to hearing further comments from my colleagues in opposition as we continue through adjourned debates. But at this time I'll move that we adjourn debate on Bill 146.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 146. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 148

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 148 — *The Film Content Information Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is three of three for me today, so hopefully everyone is doing fine on the other side. I got heckled and shouted at a little bit last week when I did three in a row, so we'll see how things go today.

So I am happy to talk a little bit about Bill 148, *The Film Content Information Act*. My understanding is that this is replacing *The Film and Video Classification Act* of 2016. Certainly if we examine the changes in how film and video and even the language has changed in the last, you know, I guess seven years or so from the previous legislation, there's so much that's changed in the industry. Part of that was due to the pandemic and the way that we consume media. Part of that is due to changes in how media is produced around the world, things that are made more so for direct to streaming.

I don't know if we remember back, back in the day when there was content, it used to be a bit of a dis, you know, to say that something went like straight to video. Like there's a lot of movies out there that I can tell you that if it didn't spend any time in the theatre, that was a bad thing. I mean it probably wasn't a very

good film if something didn't get, you know, box office release and numbers. We'd probably kind of quietly make fun of that — oh, direct to video — like that was somehow not as good.

But now we have lots of things that go direct to streaming. Things that were, you know, winning awards and really making a ton of money for their streaming platforms and things like that, whether it be like Netflix, or I hear Crave is popular in here. I won't go into why, but I hear it's popular.

[15:15]

You know, there is a lot of great programming out there that just the landscape has changed as far as how things are produced, how it's consumed. Our role as consumers of media, our relationship with that kind of media has changed quite a bit. So the need to update an Act like this I think is apparent to all.

You know, I haven't been to a movie in a theatre . . . I don't even know the last time. My family did go to see the Taylor Swift concert. Have you seen it? Probably not, is my guess. I hope that's not offensive but you don't seem like a Swiftie. And I was wearing my friendship bracelet in the Assembly for weeks, which is a Swiftie thing.

So they went and saw a film in the theatre, but I haven't been in a theatre in ages, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't even know. I'm hearing some of my colleagues — *Paw Patrol*, Taylor Swift on Sunday, *The Eras Tour*, like it looks great. I'm seeing thumbs. Reputation era. Okay. So I don't even know the last time I went to a film in the theatre. I don't get out enough. This is going to make me sound a little pathetic but I really don't.

So I like consuming, you know, in the comfort of home. You know, like we've got a few of those platforms at home, and actually over the last couple . . . There was a time there a couple of weeks ago where I was home sick and I was able to share a film with my middle child, Tom. That was my favourite movie growing up, was *Field of Dreams*. I am a soft . . . Like *Field of Dreams*, like I was sitting there at the end. I'm crying; he is not crying. He doesn't know why it's such a big deal.

But it's like, it's just such a great movie. I absolutely love it, you know. And I think we watched . . . I don't know, maybe it was on Disney. I can't remember how we did that one. *Field of Dreams*, my absolute favourite movie growing up. I still love it today. I probably haven't seen it in 15 years. But I'm telling you, go back and rewatch those oldies, those classics. It's just such a great film.

This past weekend we sat down for a family movie the other night, and we watched *Akeelah and the Bee*. *Akeelah and the Bee*, and the final scene . . . I was looking for ways I could maybe use some of these big spelling bee words in the Assembly. I don't know. I'm probably not going to try, but the winning word was "pulchritude." I don't know, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Do you think you could spell the word "pulchritude"? Me neither, but I watched the movie, and they've got this great ending where all these people who helped the main character throughout the story, spell the word at the end. It's just one of the greatest, like little clips that, you know, again kind of hits you right in the heart. It's just a wonderful story.

And my kids loved it too. We watched that one because my youngest, Myles, has really taken a lot to reading and spelling, and we've been holding these spelling competitions at home. So you know, gathering the family around the movie is kind of what I'm getting at here. And that's probably a tradition in lots of homes, where we gather around a screen to spend some time together; you cuddle up on the couch.

And I think it is fair to expect that Saskatchewan families would know what they're going to be viewing, or have a way to know what might be there. My kids are fairly sensitive. I heard my colleague, the member from Regina University talk about that, not one for violence on the screen. My kids are pretty sensitive, and I do like to know what's going to be on that screen before we pick a movie.

And let me tell you, there's been lots of times when we would have to shut things down because it was just maybe too intense, too graphic, you know. The content there just wasn't what my kids wanted to see or were comfortable seeing, and we as parents likewise.

So I think that there's some considerations here with updating and bringing in new legislation that will hopefully help when folks, whether they're going out to the theatre or however we're consuming movies nowadays and films, that there would be, you know, a chance for the audience to know more about the content of that film so that they're prepared to make their own informed decisions as far as viewing goes.

So there are some good changes here, to see that that's coming in. There's lots, lots of other content in this legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I think we need to continue to consider, including things like penalties for non-compliance.

And I did review the minister's comments, looking to cut some red tape and kind of modernize and streamline and make things easier for exhibiting films in theatres. And I think any time, like I think by and large that cutting red tape is good, but we have to make sure that all those consequences, intended and unintended, have been considered, that stakeholders' input is there to make sure that when we're cutting red tape, sometimes the red tape is there for a purpose that we might not fully understand unless we talk to the experts, who are most often outside this building.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope that we'll continue to give time to those folks who know the industry well to make sure that these are the changes that they have requested and that it'll be supportive to our film industry here in Saskatchewan, which is not the track record that this Assembly has always had. But on this side we're very proud to have always supported producers and those who earn a living in the film industry here in Saskatchewan.

So we'll look forward to hear more comments from them and from our legal critics on this. But at this time I'll move that we adjourn debate on Bill 148, *The Film Content Information Act*. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 148. Is that the pleasure of the Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 149

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 149 — *The Franchise Disclosure Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased and honoured to be a part of the debate on Bill 149, *The Franchise Disclosure Act*. I was looking at all the amendments on the bill that are proposed. As we know, with the passage of time, things have been changing — amendments, modifications. It is the nature that we are looking into the past, what happened, and how these things can impact, and in future, how we can safeguard all those things to make sure that we can encourage the franchises in our province.

And obviously all franchises that come into our province, they bring in a lot of resources, work opportunities as well. But on the other side is a promise. It is the responsibility of the ministry of franchise controlling our businesses, that they have to be looking into that as well, how much we are getting from them as well.

I travelled a few years ago from Niagara Falls all the way to Pennsylvania, and while we were driving, my kids, they were always asking me, Dad, when the Tim Hortons comes, then you have to stop. And I was driving all the way, but for hours and hours, we couldn't see any Tim Hortons. Eventually I stopped at one gas station and I talked to the guy, and he said, well there's no Tim Hortons. I said, well it's in Canada. Not over here a lot.

So when we have franchises, people are attracted over here. So in the amendment, what they were saying? I'm not really clear about that. He's talking about local franchise, that any business that is expanding in Saskatoon, we are spreading them in the province. We are talking about them as well. Those rules, those amendment will be applicable on that but it will be only on the franchise that's coming from foreign countries, from other countries, out of Canada.

We have a terrible experience as well by having a lot of discussion out on the doorstep with people, that people that they do . . . businesses over here, they open over here very luxury franchise. They're using our workforce. Obviously they have to pay. The money stays in our province, but the net amount of profit that they're taking out of province, it's huge.

And we have to make sure we have to retain that money in our province if we can take it. I'm not saying that will be the case in every situation, but in some kind of profession we need really professional people which we might be not having available in our province. And we might be not having those skills. In these circumstances that could be the case, but overall we have to encourage those franchises that benefit us as a province over here that would be greatly appreciated.

Well it says about disclosure so anything that we need, in past if the ministry looked into that if any problem happen or anything and look to the database and find it out some kind of safeguard

or some kind of protection, what are the things that we need from franchises that in future down the road they are working in our province. We should have to be having a healthy experience with them and make sure our province be getting a job opportunity. Along with that we should economically be stable in getting something from that.

Well here it says the franchise have the right to “. . . associate with other franchisees and may form or join an organization of franchisees.” And these things have to be looked into really critical, like how these things can affect and we make sure that if one franchise is becoming that big, big franchise that if they are denouncing or they are getting out of business should not be impacting us a lot. At the end we are not going to any bargain that will be paying us a lot of amount of that, so we have to look into that as well.

So it says establish a legal action for franchise can take against liability and damage alongside with this section. Obviously anything that liability or anything happen, they have to fulfill with that.

So I will say that we can't ignore the importance of franchises in our province. As economically we are putting ourselves in a stable situation, we can't really say that it should not be. But we make sure we have to make the workflow a little bit simple, not very complicated that people looking into the paperwork and they don't keep their courage to invest in our province. So we make sure we have to be looking into that as well.

On Bill No. 149, the franchise disclosure, we'll be consulting with different stakeholders, business community as well. And those that are already working over here, they will be looking into that as well, so they will get back with some better feedback. With that I will be adjourning the debate on Bill 149, *The Franchise Disclosure Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of Bill 149. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to agree?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 150

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 150 — *The Securities (Saskatchewan Investors Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a privilege to be on my feet today to talk to Bill No. 150, *The Securities (Saskatchewan Investors Protection) Amendment Act of 2023*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Act has a number of pieces to it. The Sask Securities Commission can designate independent dispute resolution services. They can order registrants to change conduct practices, pay fees, forgive debts, waive contracts, correct information, a number of other things, including the maximum

administration penalty increasing from \$100,000 to 1 million. You know, we are excited to see the maximum penalty matching that of other provinces to protect folks in this province.

There is certainly some concern — and we've been hearing this from stakeholders already — concern about the broad mention of "in the public interest," that the commission is, you know, acting in the public interest. And so we're wondering, what is the public interest? In this regard here, it's so vague and so broad that it's almost meaningless. So are we talking the public interest of future generations? Are we talking about economic interests? Interests to the public? So having some more clarity around what this Act encompasses in terms of its public interest would be a benefit.

We are welcoming to see greater oversight and decentralization from the minister's office, having the ability for issues, complaints to be looked at by an independent process. We also think that the oversight body should have the means to enforce their recommendations.

The last thing that I'm going to speak to on this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that in the Act we are concerned about the fact that there is vague mention of oversight, and there doesn't appear to be any appeals process. And so there is a concern around the accountability of this independent dispute resolution and other pieces to the amendment here.

[15:30]

So these are some of the questions that we will continue to look into, to have our critic on this file, the critic for Justice, continue to look into, talk to stakeholders and others in our province who are concerned or supportive of this amendment. And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 150.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 150. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 151

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 151 — *The SaskEnergy (Carbon Tax Fairness for Families) Amendment Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and enter into the debate on Bill No. 151, *The SaskEnergy (Carbon Tax Fairness for Families) Amendment Act*.

Now as we all know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill arose from a decision by the federal government to carve out home heating for a very select group of Canadians from the carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, resulting in inequality in how the carbon tax is applied throughout Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now we stood up firmly against this carve-out and the unfairness that it means for

Saskatchewan residents.

And really in addition to that, the frustration we feel about the federal government's — the minister in particular — flippant remarks stating that if residents of Western Canada wanted a carve-out of the carbon tax, they should just elect more Liberals, which is quite an offensive thing to say to the public and is hard to stomach in times like today, during an affordability crisis like we are seeing right now in Saskatchewan in particular and hearing on the doorsteps when we're out in our communities, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I know that my colleague the critic is doing very good work reaching out to experts on this. We want to make sure that this is done right — or as right as can be done, I suppose — that it's constitutionally sound. I've heard some concerns about whether or not this is a violation of the rule of law, but I know that's something that our critic is looking into. And what the implications will be to both consumers, the public, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well as those who may be liable for any decisions that this government may make.

It's an important piece of legislation. Unfortunately there's not a lot of time to review this important piece of legislation because of the January 1st timeline. But I know the critic is doing good work in reaching out and getting that feedback. In order to continue to facilitate her good work, I'm prepared now at this stage to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 151.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 151. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:34.]

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