



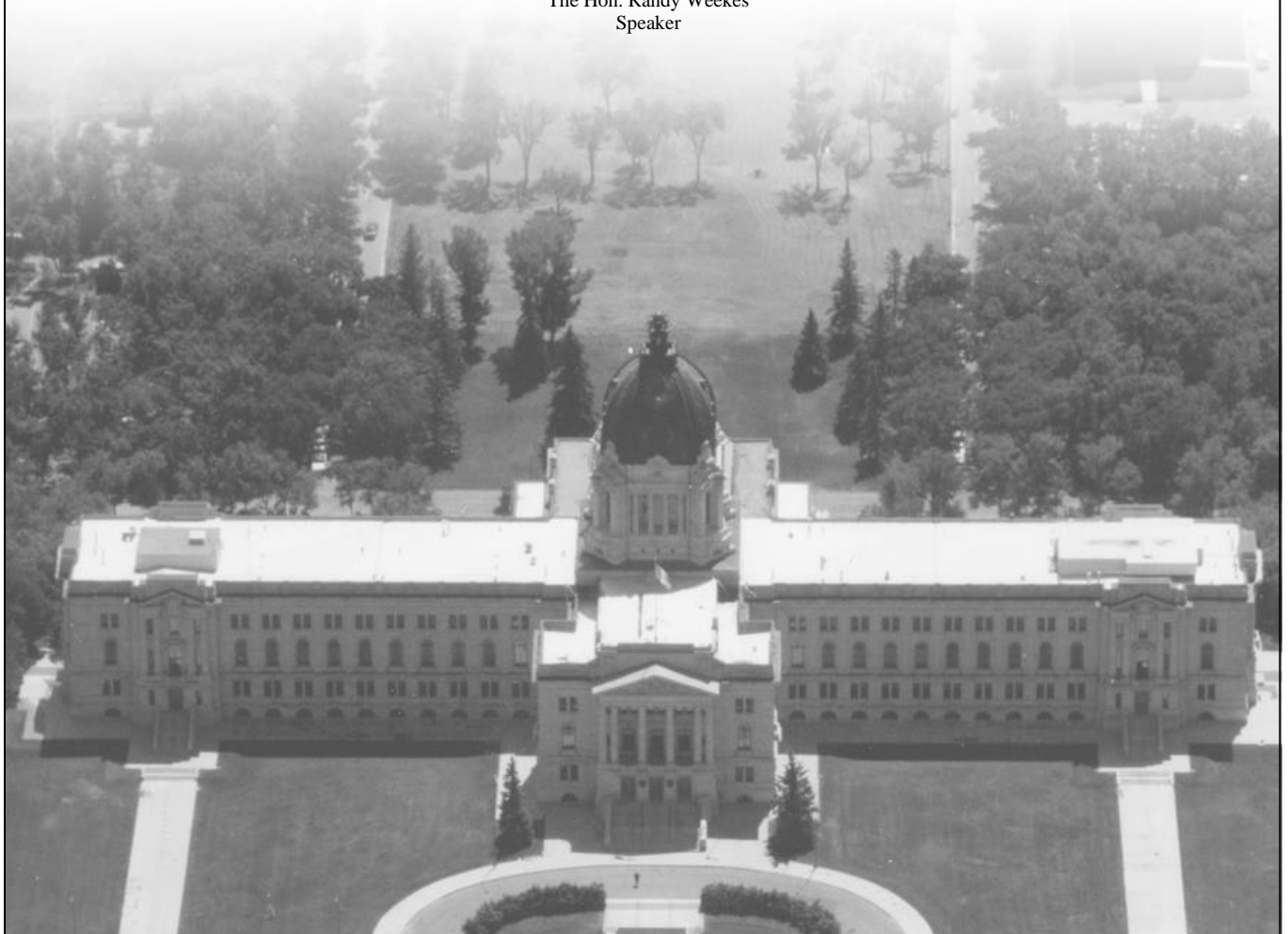
FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

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



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
4th Session — 29th Legislature

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

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

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

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 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]

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — I would like to table a report from the Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan pursuant to section 14.1 of *The Provincial Auditor Act*. The Provincial Auditor has submitted her *Business and Financial Plan for the Year Ended March 31st, 2025*.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely a thrill here today to welcome 14 of the finest students you will find in this province, seated in the west gallery. These are grade 12 students from Imperial, Saskatchewan, Imperial School from there. So please give a wave. And they are joined by their teacher, Victoria Danyluk, and a couple of parent chaperones, Kathy Williams and Joslin Freeman.

And I'm certainly looking forward after question period to connecting with these fine folks and having a good conversation. So with that I would certainly welcome them and ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to the legislature today, I'd like to introduce a few people sitting in your gallery. First of all, Aaron Hill, who works in my office every day in communications and does a great job working with our team there to ensure that we're responding to inquiries and responding to different issues that come up during the day.

Joining Aaron today though are his mother- and father-in-law, Tim and Tammy Kachaluba, and they're a couple of high school sweethearts who have dedicated their lives to industry and public service here in Saskatchewan. Tammy, a registered nurse for over 30 years, spent most of her career on the oncology unit actually at Regina Pasqua Hospital serving patients with some of the most severe cancer diagnoses that we see. Tim, a career steelworker, has spent over 30 years at the Evraz plant on the north end of the city. And starting as a labourer, Tim has moved up the ranks to crane operator, to safety manager, and is now the head of safety at the Regina plant for Evraz.

Now also joining us, Mr. Speaker, is Aaron's brother, Josh. Now Josh I understand is not only following in the footsteps of being a Toronto Maple Leafs fan like his father but is also employed at Evraz and is an electrical engineer technologist. And I understand that Josh was recently married. His wife was unable to make it today but congratulations to both of them.

And last but certainly not least, Mr. Speaker, probably the most important person in Aaron's life, his wife, Bailey. And Bailey is a nurse here at the medical surveillance unit at Regina Pasqua, I believe in her fourth year working in the health care system here in the province.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, we often talk about our families being very important to us in roles that we do here. Certainly the same is true for our staff, and our families always make us better people. So I'd like to ask all members of the Assembly to welcome Aaron and his family to their legislature here today.

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

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce 16 public service employees seated in your gallery. Please give a wave.

They are here today, Mr. Speaker, to take part in the parliamentary program for the public service. This program includes a tour of the Legislative Building, briefings presented by various branches of the Legislative Assembly Service, an opportunity to sit in the Speaker's gallery and observe question period, and after question period they're going to have a brief meeting with myself and the member from Douglas Park too as well and yourself too, Mr. Speaker.

The participants are employees from the following ministries: Agriculture, Social Services, Highways, Energy and Resources, Government Relations, Immigration and Career Training, integrated justice services, SaskBuilds and Procurement, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, Trade and Export Development, Labour Relations and Workplace Safety. So please join me in welcoming these people to this, their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to join with the member opposite in welcoming this fine group of public servants to their Legislative Assembly. It's always a pleasure to have the parliamentary program here. I hope you have a very wonderful day and that you learn a lot throughout the course of

your meetings and by observing proceedings today.

I always enjoy the opportunity to have the question and answer after question period so I'm very much looking forward to, as is the member opposite, meeting with you later and having a great dialogue. On behalf of the province, let me say thank you for the work that all of you do as public servants each and every day in your respective ministries. And I ask once again all members join me in welcoming all of you, all of them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, in the west gallery, I'd like to welcome Mr. Elden Jamieson. He's a rancher from the Cypress Hills area and also the reeve of the RM [rural municipality] of Maple Creek. I'd like to welcome to your legislature building. Thank you.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Request leave for an extended invitation.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's such a pleasure to be on my feet here today and introduce speakers located in the east gallery. These are such dedicated individuals who have been working so tirelessly to advocate for a safe water supply here in Saskatchewan. I'm just so proud of all the work that they've been doing. They're here to also be present when I introduce Bill 615, the bill that will call for a comprehensive wetland conservation policy here in Saskatchewan.

And I just want to start off by naming those who are present here today. We have Tom Fink, who is a counsellor with the resort village of Kannata Valley. He's also a director of the Last Mountain Lake Stewardship Group. Lizabeth Nicholls is an environmental educator, works with the Project WET [Water Education Today] to provide literacy on water conservation. Murray Steffenson is here from the SAWS [Saskatchewan Alliance for Water Sustainability] organization, which is the Saskatchewan alliance for water stewardship and also an advocate for protecting the Quill lakes.

Also present is Lois Adams, a landowner in the Quill lakes area concerned about wetland conservation. We have Brenda MacLauchlan; she owns a quarter section in the Qu'Appelle area. We have Pieter van der Breggen, also a member of the Calling Lakes Ecomuseum and owner of the BraeBurn Inn.

Colleen Stueck is here. She also owns a quarter section of land and is concerned about upland drainage impacting her land. We have Susan and Sandra Lowndes. They are organic farmers in the Kelvington area that have been impacted by illegal drainage. Dwight Lemon and Carol Lemon join us from Reid Lake. They live on the lake permanently. Dwight is a Co-Chair of the

cottagers association, and they've been active in developing a Facebook page for the Duncairn reservoir migratory bird stakeholders group to spread awareness about concerns with irrigation on Reid Lake.

Also present is Ann Donovan; she lives along Long Lake. And I want to thank her for reminding all of us that there are two essentials to life, human life here in Saskatchewan — and indeed the world — and that is clean air and clean water. Also present we have Sandy Stepan; she is a member of the Calling Lakes Ecomuseum. And last but not least, Carol and Ken Bell, they are retired farmers that live here in Regina and are concerned about safe drinking water.

It's such an honour to have you present here to watch the proceedings here in the Assembly here today. I would like all members to join me in welcoming these residents to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

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

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

The below undersigned are residents of the great community of Bracken, Mr. Speaker. 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 of Saskatchewan to protect Saskatchewan's water supply. The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: that water is essential for human health, recreation, health of our ecosystems, and our economy; that research from the University of Regina shows the water quality of Saskatchewan lakes is getting worse; and that the Provincial Auditor has pointed out that Saskatchewan's lack of a wetland policy negatively impacts water quality and that significant work remains to better regulate drainage.

Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan actively protect Saskatchewan waters from current and future threats to our water supply.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories today reside in Fort Qu'Appelle and Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatchewan Producers Are Leaders in Agricultural Sustainability

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan producers are true pioneers of agriculture sustainability. For decades our producers have focused on soil health, animal health, innovative technology, and research. The Global Institute for Food Security has quantified the numbers and found that Saskatchewan's net carbon footprint for crop production is significantly lower than any other competitive jurisdiction around the world. For example, the carbon footprint of Saskatchewan-produced lentil production in Saskatchewan is over 130 per cent lower than our closest competitor.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan producers sequester an average of almost 95 per cent of agriculture emissions. Saskatchewan also has 20 million acres of native grassland and tame forages for livestock production, one-third of Canada's total. And this land sequesters additional carbon. With Saskatchewan's carbon sequestration as reported in the *National Inventory Report*, and the carbon sequestered in our grasslands, we believe our agriculture emissions from cropping, livestock, and on-farm fuel is already net zero.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, this right here is the Saskatchewan record, the Saskatchewan story. While members opposite continue to adopt irresponsible viewpoints, such as supporting the carbon tax, we will continue to have the backs of our agricultural producers and tell their story around the world.

It's a privilege for our government to have an opportunity to bring our sustainability story to COP28 [Conference of Parties 28] and show the rest of the world how great we are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Couple Impacted by Illegal Drainage

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to recognize Lane and Sandra Mountney. Lane and Sandra have one of many farms in Saskatchewan that are impacted negatively by illegal or unpermitted drainage.

Their farm has been impacted by the Wawken drainage project

that started about three years ago but hasn't been completed. The project is close to 14 square kilometres and contains 880 wetlands of various sizes, amounting to a total of 2.4 square kilometres of water.

As of this spring, approximately 12 per cent of the wetlands remain intact. Most of the water being drained flows into the creek that runs through a portion of Lane and Sandra's land. Their land is needed in the project as the outlet end to handle the rise in the creek's levels.

This past spring they were left to deal with some of their pasture land flooding. Their well water has been impacted as well, contaminated and turning yellow, unsafe for human consumption for many months after the flooding.

The Water Security Agency's complaint-based system pits neighbour against neighbour, and I understand Lane and Sandra's frustrations when they've been told that their views don't matter. Thanks to Lane and Sandra for standing up and speaking out when the interests of those upstream are valued more than their land and livelihoods.

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

Wanuskewin Heritage Park Wins National Tourism Award

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan's own Wanuskewin Heritage Park has won a national tourism award as Canada's top Indigenous tourism destination at this year's annual Tourism Industry Association of Canada awards night held in Ottawa on November 22nd.

Mr. Speaker, people from around the country are seeking to come and bear witness to over 6,000 years of history represented by Wanuskewin. This award was based on several factors including cultural sustainability, economic impact, and the quality of tourism experiences. And, Mr. Speaker, anyone who has visited can testify that Wanuskewin knocks it out of the park when it comes to all those factors.

In addition to breathtaking scenery and walking trails as well as detailed historical exhibits and galleries, Wanuskewin is also home to an amazing interactive interpretive centre.

I would also be remiss if I didn't mention that Wanuskewin Heritage Park is currently pursuing UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] World Heritage status. If successful in the bid for this prestigious accolade, Wanuskewin will become Saskatchewan's first UNESCO site, and I think this national tourism award is yet another reason why everyone in our province can be proud of this historical treasure.

I ask that all members join me in congratulating all of Wanuskewin's hard-working staff, volunteers, and management on this recognition, and for their dedication to keeping Indigenous culture and history alive on the plains. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Community Advocacy Leads to Regina Lutheran Home Remaining Open

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week the people of Regina Coronation Park got some good news. You see, a few months ago the Sask Party government told them they were closing Regina Lutheran Home. Regina Lutheran Home is one of the best long-term care homes in the city, so that was a tough decision and surprise for the 62 people living there and for their families.

But then last week the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] announced that Lutheran care home would stay open. Why did this happen, Mr. Speaker? Was it because the Sask Party government decided to invest in our seniors? No. It was because those families spoke up. They came down and said, “You can’t close it down. It’s my mother’s home, my father’s home, my wife’s home.” And the government had no choice but to listen to them.

I’m new to this job, Mr. Speaker, but I’m so proud that we got this done with Regina Coronation Park. That’s because of the hard work of my colleagues in the Saskatchewan NDP, but especially to the brave families and the workers of Regina Lutheran Home. I thank and congratulate those fine people. You did this. Thank you.

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

Saskatchewan Para Athlete Inspires as a Role Model

Mr. Nerlien: — Mr. Speaker, I’d like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the strength and determination of Kyrell Sopotytk, a young man whose passion for sports began in Porcupine Plain. Over the years, his skill and work ethic eventually earned him a spot with the junior hockey league Kamloops Blazers.

In January of 2021 Kyrell suffered a tragic snowboarding accident, leaving him paralyzed from the chest down. By October of 2021 Kyrell was all ready to try racing in his wheelchair and has transitioned into a successful multi-sport para athlete in both wheelchair basketball and track and field. Since his accident, Kyrell has won a bronze medal in wheelchair racing for the province at the 2022 Canada Summer Games and three gold medals at the 2023 Canadian Track & Field Championships in Langley, BC [British Columbia].

Mr. Speaker, these are just a couple of Kyrell’s accomplishments since that fateful day. Kyrell continues to work hard and hopes to one day become a Paralympian.

I want to acknowledge Kyrell not only for his athletic ability but also on being a positive role model for so many. To quote Kyrell:

The big one for me was just staying positive through the whole process. Right from the day of the injury, I realized that I wasn’t able to change the past, and I can only move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we can all learn from these words. Thank you.

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

New Urgent Care Centre in Regina Nears Completion

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan, every day is better than yesterday. Construction has officially reached 85 per cent completion on the new urgent care centre. This centre will provide patients with additional points of access to the health care system, helping to relieve pressure on emergency departments and providing more responsive and convenient patient care. It will be open 24 hours a day and seven days a week, ensuring patients always have access to essential services when they need them.

The urgent care centre will complement the services already provided in the community by family physicians and primary care clinics and allow more access for mental health and addictions services by offering same-day care for urgent but not life-threatening issues. Supported by a mix of health care professionals, the urgent care centre will offer team-based care that can also provide connection to community services.

We appreciate the exceptional work of Graham Construction on this project and all our health care workers who will be staffing this facility. Right now the Hospitals of Regina Foundation is raising funds to prepare the final touches on the urgent care centre. We cannot express enough our government’s appreciation for the collaborative partnership we have developed over the years with the foundation.

We look forward to patients being provided more access to health care in 2024. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Uranium Mining Project in Northern Saskatchewan Awaits Federal Approval

Mr. Lemaigre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our province is one step closer to being the location of the new, biggest uranium mining project in Canada. On November 8th, NexGen Energy received ministerial approval under *The Environmental Assessment Act* of Saskatchewan to proceed with the development of the Rook I project.

The project is currently planned to be located 130 kilometres north of La Loche. Mr. Speaker, NexGen is the first company in more than 20 years to receive full provincial environmental assessment approval for the greenfield uranium project in Saskatchewan. Once the project hopefully gets under way, it will represent just under a quarter of the world’s uranium production in just a few years.

Being located close to First Nations, Métis Nations, and other communities creates opportunities for residents to benefit economically through jobs and increased access to education. However there’s only one thing standing in the way of this economic opportunity — that’s right, the federal government. Ottawa should not infringe upon the economic sovereignty of northern Saskatchewan, and blocking projects like Rook I will lead to lost opportunities for northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as a representative for the Athabasca constituency

and someone with roots that tie me directly to the success of these projects, I am hoping the federal government will do the right thing and approve the project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Health Care Staffing and Access to Diagnostic Services

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This tired and out-of-touch government is failing to deliver on health care. We were joined here earlier today by health care workers from Pasqua Hospital here in Regina. These folks work in diagnostics, providing X-ray, radiological and CT [computerized tomography] scans to Saskatchewan people who are sick or injured so they can get the treatment and the care that they need. But they're frustrated, frustrated by the chronic short-staffing they see each and every day when they come to work.

When there aren't enough staff their unit gets shut down and appointments are cancelled. When will this government actually listen to health care workers and fix the short-staffing crisis facing patients today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by thanking the medical radiation technologists at the Pasqua Hospital and all across Regina and across our province who are providing this very valuable service for patients right across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And our government, as I've said previously, is very committed to doing what needs to be done to recruit, train, incentivize, and retain health care workers, and that includes medical radiation technologists.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that there are some vacancies that need to be filled at the Pasqua Hospital as well, Mr. Speaker. My office has been in contact with the group that the member opposite is speaking of, and we're in the process of setting up a meeting for me to have a chance to sit down and meet with them directly and to hear about their concerns, their ideas and solutions, and how we can proceed with taking those ideas from them and trying to implement those solutions into our health care system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, you'd think from listening to that minister that everything in our health system is just fine. But that's not the case. Health care workers know the reality when they go to work and see the failures of this government.

The people who joined us here today have seen their unit closed when there aren't enough staff. With many open vacancies, unfilled positions, and staff burning out, that's at risk of happening again this winter. If just one or two of these staff at the Pasqua Hospital catch a flu or call in sick, the whole system will collapse at the Pasqua.

How is this acceptable to that minister? How has he allowed our

health care system to become so overwhelmed and so understaffed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a strategy in place to address this and many other issues that we have when it comes to staffing, Mr. Speaker. It's my understanding that there are six medical radiation technologists at the Pasqua Hospital that work with the CT machine at that particular facility. It's my understanding that there are currently two vacancies posted by the SHA that are open to applicants, and a third vacancy for a maternity leave has been posted and they're actually in the process of interviewing applicants to fill that maternity leave position.

And again, the SHA, in conjunction with the new Saskatchewan health recruitment agency, are using these tools and all tools available to them to recruit to fill the vacancies, both whether they're permanent vacancies or whether they're maternity leave vacancies, and making sure that we have the appropriate combination, the appropriate mix of staff to be able to ensure that we maintain services at Pasqua Hospital. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, that minister would know, if he listened to health care workers, that his actions have not been appropriate to meet the challenges in our system. This tired and out-of-touch government is failing right across the board when it comes to diagnostics. We learned last week that it's taking six months to get booked for a mammogram in Saskatoon. And the government's own website shows that 1,544 people have already waited more than 90 days for MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] and CT scans in this province.

What does the minister say to those 1,544 people waiting for a scan because this government has allowed short-staffing to become the norm in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This has been a major priority for us as government. I have met over the past number of weeks with women from across Saskatchewan who have expressed their concerns about, frankly, unacceptable wait times for breast cancer biopsies and diagnostics.

Mr. Speaker, at 1:30 this afternoon the government issued a press release that we are procuring 1,000 scans through a private provider, publicly funded, in Calgary to eliminate the 300-plus wait-list that we have for people that are waiting for breast cancer biopsies.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, this is an urgent and an immediate action to provide this option for women to travel to Calgary immediately. They'll be contacted by the Regina Breast Assessment Centre to be offered the opportunity to have those diagnostics done quickly, Mr. Speaker, while the government continues to work to fill the

specialized radiology vacancies that we have, Mr. Speaker. That's action that's being taken and that is benefiting women across this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, this minister should remember when his government shipped Saskatchewan residents across the country during COVID. It wasn't a sign of their success; it was a sign of their failure. And the fact that they're doing that again to Saskatchewan people is not a sign that they've managed our health system well; it's a sign of their failures.

Mr. Speaker, without staff at the Pasqua Hospital those 1,500 patients can't get their MRI and CT scans. That means they get a delayed diagnosis and they get delayed treatment as a result. All of this impacts patient care.

When will the Sask Party accept any responsibility for the state of diagnostic care today, and when will they work with health care workers to solve these long-standing issues in our province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the term that the member opposite used was "shipped" out of province. Is that what he's implying for the women that are facing breast cancer? Is that what he's implying, that they are being shipped out to Calgary? What would they rather do? What would the members opposite rather do? Would they rather have these women wait? Is that what they would rather do?

When this was identified, Mr. Speaker, I had instructed and asked our officials that we look at all options on the table, look at absolutely every option to be able to provide breast cancer biopsies and diagnosis for women facing breast cancer. Look at every option.

This was an option that became available to us, Mr. Speaker, and I think the women of this province who are struggling and faced with the fear of breast cancer will appreciate this option to be able to get the care they need as quickly as they can and not be opposed by the members opposite, who are opposed to this for who knows what reason. Because this, Mr. Speaker, is the right thing to do.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, that minister should know that every available option would mean listening to Saskatchewan women, listening to Saskatchewan health care workers to provide the care where they need it, when they need it. And he's failing at that.

These problems are not just limited to diagnostics at the Pasqua Hospital. These short-staffing issues are widespread across the health care system. Nurses protested outside of St. Paul's Hospital just this week because of chronic short-staffing. And earlier this morning, SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] president Tracy Zambory told the media that Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert is 112 per cent capacity and the OR [operating room] is closed.

Chronic short-staffing is the norm throughout our health care system under that minister's watch. Will the minister finally admit that his health human resource plan is not working?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been listening to front-line health care providers. The SHA has been listening to front-line health care providers. I'm told by the CEO [chief executive officer] of the SHA they had a three-hour meeting with nurses at St. Paul's Hospital on November 22nd. They sat down, met with front-line health care providers, provided some solutions which the SHA is now implementing, Mr. Speaker.

And here's what's happening in this province, Mr. Speaker. Since December of last year, 870 new nursing grads coming through Saskatchewan training institutions hired into our health care facilities, 600-net new nurses, more registered nurses, more licensed practical nurses, more nurse practitioners in this province, Mr. Speaker.

What's the NDP position on this? What is their plan? What is their record, Mr. Speaker? You know, we had a look, Mr. Speaker. In their 2020 election platform, what did they promise to do? They promised to hire, Mr. Speaker, a grand total of 450 more nurses over four years, Mr. Speaker. We have hired over 600 nurses in just one year, far above the NDP's paltry targets of 450 over a span of four years, Mr. Speaker.

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

Agricultural Water Stewardship Policy

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government isn't listening to health care workers, and they're not listening to people who have concerns about this government's failures when it comes to managing wetlands and our water resources.

Saskatchewan is the only province without a wetland conservation policy. More than a dozen people are here today calling on this government to finally develop a strategy to protect wetlands. More than 2,300 people wrote letters to the Premier asking for the same, and they still haven't got a response.

Will the Minister for the Water Security Agency meet with the people who have come here today, and will he commit to a comprehensive wetland policy?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the guests to the gallery and to the session on question period, Mr. Speaker. Obviously we have really done an intensive process of the dialogue with the delegates, Mr. Speaker. We want to make a made-in-Saskatchewan water management strategy. That obviously is key to the future as we build and protect our world-class sustainable agriculture sector, Mr. Speaker. The stewardship policy will include a suite of policy tools such as wetland retention, using drained water for irrigation, and cropland-beneficial management practices, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a very, very engaging process. We have met with over 70 different organizations and stakeholders across the province, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to do that as well, Mr. Speaker. I have lots of answers here, Mr. Speaker. I can give a list of everybody we've been engaged with. I can tell you, the consultation process continues.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, the consultation has not been intensive. I've heard from many stakeholders who have said just as much. We're losing tens of thousands of acres of wetlands every single year.

Conserving our wetlands is important for everyone in this province. It's important for the environment, yes, but it's so much more. It's critical to our economy. It's important for hunters and outfitters, for drinking water, for First Nation and Métis rights, for recreation and cabin owners.

There's a wide swath of people who are impacted by the loss of wetlands, and this government is failing all of them. When will this minister act, and when will we see a comprehensive wetland conservation policy?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — As I said, Mr. Speaker, in my previous answer, we have started the consultation process. It has been ongoing, Mr. Speaker. I do have a list of everybody we have consulted with and, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to put it on the record. It's going to take me a while, Mr. Speaker, because there's 70 different groups. But I'm going to list them all because the member opposite asked. The member opposite asked who we consulted with, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to give the list and read it into the record today. And I don't care if it takes the whole question period, Mr. Speaker, I will give it: Saskatchewan Winter Cereals Development Commission; Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce Water Council; the Provincial Association of Resort Communities of Saskatchewan; the Saskatchewan provincial parks owners' association; the Prairie Water — Global Institute for Water Security, University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker; Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative, University of Regina; the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy; the Saskatchewan Mustard Development Commission; Saskatchewan Forage Council; Saskatchewan Seed Growers. That's page 1, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, there are so many people in this province who have been blocked from participating in those consultations, and they're tired of not being heard. They have serious concerns about this government's upcoming ag water stewardship policy. The focus is far too narrow, and the consultations have shut out many of the folks here today and other important stakeholders.

Every single person in this province needs access to clean water,

and this tired and out-of-touch government isn't listening. The feedback from people and experts needs to be incorporated into the plan, and the costs of mismanaging our water resource, like the hit to our producers this year, need to be taken into account. Wetlands help to mitigate and manage the impacts of drought.

Will the minister actually listen to these people, and will he ensure the cost of mismanaging out water resources are fully taken into consideration?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Mr. Speaker, as I have said, the folks at Water Security Agency have been totally engaged with the public, both in either written submissions, phone-in comments, or in-person submissions as well, Mr. Speaker.

I did page 1, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to go to page 6, but I will read the others if the members opposite want to hear them.

Here they are: Fishing Lake First Nation, Pheasant Rump Nakota Nation, Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation, Onion Lake First Nation, Thunderchild First Nation, Big Bear First Nation, Peter Chapman First Nation. These were all part of the consultation process, Mr. Speaker. Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, Battlefords Tribal Council, Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs, File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, Saskatoon Tribal Council, Yorkton Tribal Council, Mr. Speaker.

I'm only on the third page. I will get more, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, the people of this province are looking for real answers, not a filibuster by that minister. The people who are here today have serious concerns about how this government is mismanaging our shared water resource.

Just take a look at the issue of illegal drainage. When one landowner illegally drains onto another landowner's property, it's almost impossible to get them to stop. There's no enforcement and no accountability for landowners who are doing their part and are following the rules.

It has to stop. When will the Minister for the Water Security Agency stand up for people who are following the rules but are paying the price for this government's failures to act on illegal drainage?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — As I said, Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of developing an ag water stewardship management program, Mr. Speaker. We will get the policy. We want to make sure that all aspects of this are heard, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously there's been recommendations been put forward. As of a month ago, Mr. Speaker, there was a meeting in Yorkton where there was representatives from the SCDA [Saskatchewan Conservation and Development Association], APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan], SARM

[Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities]. SAW [Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds] was there. FSA [Farm Stewardship Association] was there. SaskCanola, Saskatchewan wheat growers were there, and Sask Wheat was there, Mr. Speaker.

Many other recommendations are coming forward. That is why the consultation process is going forward and continuing, Mr. Speaker. We want to make sure we get this right for the province of Saskatchewan, a strategy that was never done under the members opposite when they were in government, Mr. Speaker. We're going to get this one right.

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

Management of Provincial Economy

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is mismanaging our public water resource. And they're mismanaging our public finances while failing to offer any relief for families facing a crushing cost of living.

They blew through their budget projections by \$1.3 billion with increased costs and lower revenues, but none of that is going to help Saskatchewan families dealing with the cost of living and all the added costs brought to them by this government by way of bills and taxes.

How is it that this government still isn't offering an ounce of cost-of-living relief for families barely getting by?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite's question speaks volumes to the fact that the NDP have no plan.

And it is very disappointing, so disappointing that they think that spending \$850 million to support our agriculture producers is blowing our money. It is so disappointing that they say spending \$80 million to combat wildfires is blowing our money. It's so disappointing that they say spending \$40 million of additional supports in the classrooms is blowing our money.

It's so disappointing that they say that over \$40 million for an approach to homelessness is blowing our money. And it's disappointing that they say spending an additional 55 million on a human resource plan in health care is blowing our money. And that is not to mention that we brought down the operating debt by \$2.5 billion and returned \$400 million into the pockets of people in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that's not the case. And that's the very minister and that ag minister that attacked producers just two years ago, Mr. Speaker, and blamed them for their deficit. But families are breaking the bank to fill the tank and they deserve some cost-of-living relief. This tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government has mismanaged our finances so badly, they're now claiming that the cupboards are bare.

[14:15]

They've wasted billions on their own mismanaged pet projects, old and new, from the bypass, to the GTH [Global Transportation Hub], to a million-dollar pavilion in Dubai, to an \$11.6 million settlement with one of the Sask Party's biggest donors. IT [information technology] projects with runaway costs, \$100 million for out-of-province contract nurses — the list goes on and on.

Why is there no end to the mismanagement this government will waste public dollars on but no relief for families at the pump?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows that the affordability tax credit that this government gave to residents in our province pays for a lot of the gas tax that is here in the province. But it's unconditional because not everybody has a vehicle to drive, or drive as far. This is unconditional for them to spend where they are having pressures.

However, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite lists areas of one-time funding that he thinks is a waste — capital dollars, quite frankly. Those capital dollars, once spent, are not available the next year for ongoing costs. But yet for ongoing costs he wants to scrap a number of the areas where we expanded the PST [provincial sales tax] to the tune of \$202 million, Mr. Speaker. He also wants to scrap the PST on construction to the tune of \$485 million, Mr. Speaker.

He wants to increase health care for the tune of . . . I'm just going to guess a number, but let's say 690 million. How about education? At least 310 million. If I go through the list, it's over 2 billion . . .

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — You know, Mr. Speaker, it's a real bad look to squander the hard-earned public dollars of Saskatchewan people while putting families and their finances under water. Wasting dollars, Mr. Speaker, while not offering a stitch of relief for Saskatchewan people, just higher costs and taxes.

We've called on this government to suspend the fuel tax for six months to help struggling families. Why won't the minister finally agree to that today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I've gone through the list a number of times, whether it's over \$2 billion in relief for individuals, families, seniors, and students within our budget this year and each and every year.

But I would like the member opposite . . . What's his plan? He has listed a number of areas, wanting forgone revenue. And he wants to have, in additional spending — not just once, not just a capital project — he wants to spend what'll be operating year over year over year. If they were in power and they did what they say they would do, we would have a deficit of \$3 billion.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Every Saskatchewan person listening to that Finance minister needs to take what she says with 1.3 billion grains of salt, Mr. Speaker.

To the Finance minister: why won't she cut the spin? Why won't she cut the waste and finally deliver some cost-of-living relief to cut the costs for families across Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Every person listening to that Finance critic should be very, very worried if they ever form power. And they will not, Mr. Speaker, because they have no plan. They make a lot of promises. They have a lot of criticism with no idea of how they're going to pay for all their promises.

They would break this province, and it would be at interest rates for ongoing, for our children in the next generation, just like what the federal government is doing, Mr. Speaker. They would be no different than the irresponsible spending of the federal government.

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

Provision of Seniors' Housing

Ms. Conway: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. On Monday we were joined by seniors from the High Park Towers in Moose Jaw, who want action on the unacceptable state of their social housing.

They don't feel safe in their own home. They feel like they're living in "a prison." They found feces and used needles in the common areas, all in a home that's supposed to provide safe and affordable housing for seniors. You know, Mr. Speaker, the situation has now got national attention, and it's completely unacceptable. And it's certainly not unique to Moose Jaw.

The minister said he would look into the matter. What has he found? And what steps will he take to make things right for these seniors?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — In terms of the seniors' housing portfolio, we work very hard to ensure that we have a safe place to stay for individuals who are 55 years of age and older, Mr. Speaker. In certain instances there will be folks who have a disability that need access to buildings, but we want to ensure and we rely on local housing authorities to ensure that people are able to live compatibly within those areas. We looked at potentially having some security available in that particular building and in that area of Moose Jaw to ensure people are safe.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Addressing Wait Times for Breast Cancer Diagnostics

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to

rise and speak about today's announcement that will help protect the health of Saskatchewan women. It's our position that the current diagnostic wait times for breast cancer are not meeting acceptable targets and more must be done immediately. That is why the Government of Saskatchewan is taking immediate action to increase overall diagnostic service volumes through a publicly funded, privately delivered agreement with a provider in Calgary.

This initiative will provide our patients with access to urgent breast cancer diagnostic procedures while ongoing work continues to improve current service levels closer to home. Eligible patients on an urgent wait-list for breast cancer diagnosis will be contacted and asked if they would like immediate access to procedures out of province at the private medical facility in Calgary. This initiative is a temporary measure to accelerate urgent diagnostic and breast cancer procedures, including breast mammography and biopsies, until these services are stabilized in our province.

The Ministry of Health does not reimburse or cover the cost of travel or accommodations for patients who receive care outside of Saskatchewan. However due to the urgent and potentially life-saving nature of these requests, and further that current in-province capacity is not sufficient to perform these procedures in a timely manner, the ministry will provide travel reimbursement to a maximum of \$1,500 to support travel expenses for the patient and one support person.

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed form of cancer in Saskatchewan women. More than 700 Saskatchewan women are diagnosed with breast cancer every year. With early detection, breast cancer can be successfully treated and women can go on to lead healthy lives.

In 2023-24 our government is providing the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency with \$222 million to support and strengthen cancer care services, a 183 per cent increase since 2007. We remain committed to ensuring patients have timely access to health care services, and we will continue working with all health care sector providers and patients to reduce these times.

The Saskatchewan Health Authority has implemented several improvements in provincial service delivery, including extending hours of service with additional volumes being performed at Saskatoon for long-waiting and urgent patients from Regina and southern areas, centralizing booking for breast imaging across Saskatchewan to provide quicker access for all patients, implementing 3-D [three-dimensional] breast imaging at SHA facilities across the province, and exploring options to increase volumes for diagnostic breast mammography in regional hospitals such as in Moose Jaw.

Our government and the SHA continue to work collaboratively on our health human resources action plan. We have put focus on training and recruitments of medical radiation technologists, sonographers, and radiologists with specialization in breast imaging. Earlier this year our government announced the expansion of more than 550 seats in high-demand health professions, including the medical radiation technologist program.

We have also significantly increased the fees paid to radiologists

for breast biopsies to support recruitments and retention of breast radiologists in our province. The SHA continues to provide financial support and incentives for additional training for general radiologists specialized in breast radiology as well as medical radiation technologists and sonographers that are interested in this specialization.

Understanding that quick access to diagnostic services is vital to ensuring patients receive timely and appropriate treatment, I had asked that all options be considered to reduce current wait-lists. And while work continues on bolstering Saskatchewan resources so we can provide this care at home, our partnership with a private provider in Alberta will offer immediate solutions to patients and staff.

This isn't the first time that our government has utilized a private-provided, publicly funded solution, and earlier this year we launched a privately operated, publicly funded partnership to allow for immediate access to procedures for long-waiting surgical patients. Since 2010 our government has utilized private surgical facilities to increase overall provincial volumes and provide timely access for patients, and we also introduced the patients' choice legislation allowing for two-for-one private-pay MRI and CT services to provide more options for Saskatchewan residents. And we know that these options provide immediate solutions.

Mr. Speaker, up to 1,000 women now have the option to accept a shorter wait time by choosing this option to travel to Calgary for care. But it will not just be the women who are travelling that will be benefiting. This will also shorten the wait-list for patients still receiving services in Saskatchewan as well, and this initiative will increase overall capacity to provide care for Saskatchewan residents in a timely manner.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Minister of Health for providing his remarks in advance for me to review. And you know, I'd like to correct something that was shared in question period today. Of course, of course all members in this Assembly on both sides absolutely want people in Saskatchewan to get access to the diagnostic scans that they need. Everybody wants that outcome.

But the fact is that we've got folks here in Saskatchewan, especially Saskatchewan women, who are in desperate situations waiting five, six months and even more for those diagnostic tests that they need to ensure that they get the care that they need. Those diagnostics tests are so crucial in informing medical decisions to provide care for Saskatchewan people, especially women facing the diagnosis of breast cancer, Mr. Speaker.

We heard this canvassed in question period today, and earlier today we were joined with several health care workers, health care workers who provide diagnostic scans at Pasqua Hospital. And they're able to point to the abysmal track record of this Sask Party government when it comes to managing our health system to ensure that people get those diagnostic scans that they need.

Today's announcement is an absolute indictment of their record on health care. It is clear evidence of their failures to provide care for Saskatchewan people where they need it and when they need it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 614 — *The Public Participation Act*

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 614, *The Public Participation Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member that Bill No. 614 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 615 — *The Comprehensive Wetland Conservation Policy Act*

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 615, *The Comprehensive Wetland Conservation Policy Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Saskatoon Nutana that Bill No. 615 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — At the next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee.

**Standing Committee on
Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice**

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report that it has considered certain supplementary estimates and to present the sixth report. I move:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice now be concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report that it has considered certain supplementary estimates and to present its sixth report. I move:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be now concurred in.

[14:30]

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Chair of the Human Services Committee:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 153 — *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes
Amendment Act, 2023***

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 153, the miscellaneous municipal statutes Act, 2023.

There are three Acts that govern municipalities in Saskatchewan: *The Cities Act*, *The Municipalities Act*, and *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010*. Together these three Acts determine how municipalities are established and governed. Many of the changes are in all three Acts, so they are combined into one bill. This ensures the provisions that relate to all three Acts are the same.

Ministry staff made presentations, attended conferences, and took part in focus groups on the key areas addressed by this bill. Our stakeholders provided input and suggestions for improvement. All that work has led to the bill before you today.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments target specific hurdles encountered in recent years. For example, minor adjustments are proposed to improve the first level of assessment appeals. Other changes focus on improvements, the relationship between organized hamlets and rural municipalities. Some of the other amendments improve local governance processes. I will touch on each of these amended areas.

Recent regulation amendments were made to improve the first level of assessment appeal. Now, Mr. Speaker, we are adjusting wording in the three Acts to better reflect those changes. Any property owner can appeal the assessment of their property, which affects how much they pay in property tax. It is important for property owners to have a just and fair process for appeals.

The first level of appeal is a municipal responsibility. Council must appoint a board of revision to hear appeals. In practice that has not always happened, especially in municipalities where appeals are decades apart. The new provision states that any municipality that does not appoint a board of revision will use a centralized board of revision by default. That way, appeals won't be sitting at the first level of appeal waiting to be heard because there is no board appointed.

The amendments also better describe the new centralized board of revision as it currently operates. This will make sure that the board is well positioned to fulfill its duties. Ensuring all property owners have access to a competent board hearing their appeals better serves the people of Saskatchewan.

The changes to the Act also align the roles and powers of the assessment appeals registrar with current duties. This provides greater clarity about the type of work the registrar does. The registrar certifies boards of revision to hear appeals in

Saskatchewan. The registrar also coordinates matters related to centralized boards of revision.

Mr. Speaker, work will be done with . . . municipal sector and assessment agencies continues. We seek to further improve the property assessment appeal system. To this end, several of the amendments improve operational matters for all boards of revision. For example, a board of revision is now able to combine appeals received on the same property into a single hearing. That way, all evidence regarding a property can be heard at the same time and a single decision will apply for that property.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to highlight some changes to the municipal Act required due to recent regulatory amendments affecting organized hamlets. Organized hamlets are established by minister's order and remain a part of the rural municipality in which they are situated. Each organized hamlet has a board to represent the community and to advise rural municipalities on budget and operational matters.

The registrar now requires the hamlet board and the rural municipality to each adopt certain policies. These policies help establish transparency and mutual understanding. To go further, this bill requires an agreement between the organized hamlet and the rural municipality. The agreement will clarify the roles and responsibilities of each party. Mr. Speaker, the agreement will address many areas of concern, like the process for managing the organized hamlet's budget.

Currently when an organized hamlet and a municipality has a dispute, a three-person appeal board is established to hear the matter. The organized hamlet's board selects one person to serve on the board. The rural municipality selects one person to sit on the board. Finally the two parties must agree on a chairperson. Now an organized hamlet or a rural municipality will be able to refer the dispute to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board. The Saskatchewan Municipal Board has the experience and the expertise of hearing municipal disputes, plus the parties will be better served because the Saskatchewan Municipal Board has the authority to require mediation before a hearing. These changes all aim to improve relationships between rural municipalities and organized hamlets. Ultimately the bill helps to build stronger Saskatchewan communities.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, several process improvements respond to the suggestions from stakeholders. As we all have experienced, virtual meetings have become more commonplace. Councils across the province have adjusted to virtual meetings when necessary. Many councils continue to hold some meetings that are fully virtual or hybrid. This bill establishes clearer rules for holding virtual council meetings. It also ensures the public continues to have a place to listen and view the meetings as it occurs.

Another process improvement suggested by stakeholders in this bill includes providing a ward population variance, for those municipalities that use wards, to be set in regulation. This will better accommodate potential updates to these limits. As well, Mr. Speaker, these amendments provide all municipalities the authority to phase in increases and decreases in property tax. Currently only cities have this authority. Now all municipalities can use the property tax tools to manage tax shifts that may occur due to re-evaluation.

Mr. Speaker, before I finish, I'd like to take a minute to thank our many stakeholders. People and organizations, both inside and outside of government, spent considerable time and effort on these amendments. Some of the amendments you see were proposed by stakeholders who devote their valuable time to refining the changes in this bill. I thank them for their input, advice, and feedback in developing this legislation.

Next spring, the ministry will consult stakeholders on associated regulation changes to support the change proposed in this bill. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I believe this bill shows government's continued commitment to supporting local government and building stronger communities throughout our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 153, *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2023*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 153 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. A pleasure to enter a couple of brief comments on Bill 153, and I'd like to just start by expressing appreciation for the work of all those who work in municipalities across the province as well as the good folks in Government Relations.

The minister highlighted a number of changes to impact these three Acts, various technical and jurisdictional challenges, Mr. Speaker. In looking at the clock here, I'm not going to say too much more other than, I think, an appreciation for all those working in and for local governments. Of course, it's important to balance efficiencies with autonomy and that local expertise of which we are so proud in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I know the critic will do the heavy lifting of working with the valued stakeholders in this sector, and with that I am happy to conclude my remarks and move to adjourn debate on Bill 153.

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. 140

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

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 140, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2023*. Pretty uncontroversial piece of legislation here, Mr.

Speaker. I understand this is a bill repealing a number of Acts that have become obsolete or outdated. It's been interesting to go back and just read some of the comments of my colleagues who have . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Also my friends. Sorry. I forgot I wasn't in court, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues who have, you know, entered into remarks about one or two of the bills.

I just want to take a moment here. I did go through the list of bills, and one of them here is the summer resort village of Carlyle Lake Resort bill, Mr. Speaker, and that hit me a little. It was assented to, I believe, in the late '50s, and I know a little thing or two about the Carlyle Lake Resort. The Fishers and Mahoods in my family spent some time there. My great-grandfather built a little shack out there back in the day. It wasn't much, but it was certainly the place of all the magical memories from my childhood. So it was neat to think about that time, Mr. Speaker.

Of course this would have been a resort situated on the White Bear Reserve, who surrendered conditionally this land for lease, Mr. Speaker. It certainly just brought back memories about the cinnamon buns at the Carlyle Bakery, which I understand, in speaking to a parent who reached out to me on a child care issue, is still very much open. And she actually works at the bakery, still making that same recipe. So it's the second time this week I've been reminded about the good times at Carlyle Lake, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But yes, this is a housekeeping bill. It's interesting to think back about how much has changed even in that community since the '50s, and certainly it makes good sense to update this legislation. So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 140.

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 now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and enter into the debate on Bill No. 142. Now I understand this legislation will change what used to be a 48-hour notice requirement for anyone who is digging around utility lines to a three working days' notice to either SaskTel, SaskPower, or SaskEnergy. Mr. Speaker, I know I have other colleagues who are very interested to also weigh in on this bill. In order to allow them to do that I am prepared now to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 142.

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 Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to Bill No. 143, *The Child Care Amendment Act*, our critic and this team has been pushing hard to improve child care across Saskatchewan. This legislation, at first blush, falls far short in providing the kind of substantive support to really turn the dial on getting the child care spaces in place that communities need, families need, when they need them, Mr. Speaker.

Our critic will continue to lead on this front, and will do so through the committee process and continue to work with stakeholders. So at this point in time, I'd move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 143.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 143. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

[14:45]

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 for Walsh Acres.

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Privileged to enter into debate on Bill No. 144, *The Police (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act* of 2023. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our team has been clear. We still see no clear reason or compelling reason as to why we need an additional marshals service in this province. We've heard from the public across this province and they're wondering the same questions. Why is another level of policing necessary? We've heard from SARM that they don't think that this is the answer to the increasing crime in rural Saskatchewan.

We have been clear that we would use the \$20 million that's being utilized by the government to create the marshals service to increase funding to RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], to give RCMP the capacity to expand their services across the province. The infrastructure is already there for them.

We would also use \$10 million to address the mental health crisis

and opioid crisis, drug crisis in this province. We've got to treat the root causes of crime, Mr. Speaker, at the same time as dealing with crime. Tough on the root of crime, tough on crime, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

With that I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 144.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 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 Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is my privilege to enter into the adjourned debate on Bill 145, *The Funeral and Cremation Services (Legal Decision-Maker Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*.

It's a kind of bill that when we are making any decision or any kind of amendment being made, it is a situation where people, family will be completely having a really sad moment. At that time we make sure whatever we can do the best to make sure that the families, when they will be dealing with that unfortunate situation that happened in their family, we have to make sure that we be clear about that. So any legislation, any amendment, if it is going forward with the stakeholders, to make sure that they are being okay with that. So we on this side of the House will be supporting in that.

With this, I think our critic on this bill will be looking into more detail by consultation with different stakeholders, so I will adjourn debate on Bill 143. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on 145. Is that agreed?

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 Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. You look wonderful in the Chair today, Mr. Speaker, as always.

Bill No. 146, *The King's Bench Consequential Amendments Act* is real straightforward and housekeeping. It simply replaces all references to Queen's Bench rules, regulations, and Act with King's Bench, Mr. Speaker.

Our critic will engage in the process, and with that being said, I'll move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 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 Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 148, *The Film Content Information Act*. We're skating along here today. I understand there's some important committee work to attend to.

I just want to get in a few comments on this bill, Mr. Speaker, and also update my friends and my colleagues that "friends" is kosher in the Westminster system. I've just got a note from staff. It's a bit old-timey maybe but regularly used, particularly in the UK [United Kingdom].

So with that, Mr. Speaker, this bill replaces *The Film and Video Classification Act, 2016*. It provides that the public must be informed of the classification of films. It establishes penalties for non-compliance with the bill. It's a modernizing Act of the legislation aimed at the industry, the film industry which I know has taken — theatres more than the industry rather, Mr. Deputy Speaker — which I know has taken a bit of a whooping during COVID.

So good to see this piece of legislation being introduced. We did wish on this side that the Sask Party had shown as much care for filmmakers, for the film industry that was growing, thriving in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We still hear about this from folks constantly on the doorstep. They're heartbroken by this Sask Party government's decision to gut the film industry.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, I don't have much more to add on this bill. I know the critic will enter into debate and provide some thoughtful comments after he's reached out to the sector, the stakeholders. And with that, I move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 148.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 148. Is that agreed?

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 Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to weigh in briefly with respect to Bill No. 149, *The Franchise Disclosure Act*, Mr. Speaker. I know the government's detailed the changes that they're aiming to bring with this Act. I know there's certainly some questions that the opposition has on this front in working with local businesses to ensure that this legislation is in fact in their best interests, Mr. Speaker. There'll be some seeking of clarity on a few different fronts, Mr. Speaker.

We know that a lot of local franchises across Saskatchewan, local businesses are facing tough times, Mr. Speaker, not made better by a government that's really stuck them with a whole lot of costs, Mr. Speaker, and that have imposed taxes and hardship that have hurt consumers across Saskatchewan.

Certainly we see the result of that, for example, through the numbers around restaurant activity in the economy, Mr. Speaker, and the jobs that are related there; same on the retail side, Mr. Speaker. And that's a reflection of the hardship and challenge that Saskatchewan people are facing, made so much worse by the choices and tax hikes and bill hikes of that Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker.

I will move to adjourn debate at this point with respect to Bill No. 149, *The Franchise Disclosure Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 149. Is that agreed?

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 Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure and honour to be standing for debate on Bill 150, *The Securities (Saskatchewan Investors Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*.

Mr. Speaker, as we talked about that earlier, that what investment we want, we make sure that people should be protected by all angles. And our critic on that subject will be having a lot of discussion, will gather a lot of information, analysis, and will be to get back to that bill. With that I will adjourn the debate on Bill 150, securities protection amendment Act, 2023. Thank you.

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. 152

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 152 — *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to be on my feet to speak to this important bill. I first want to say thank you to the minister and my colleagues for the comments that they've put on the record. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that our official opposition, our team, every single day advocate for women and vulnerable communities.

Mr. Speaker, I know that time is tight today due to our committee schedule so I'm going to be brief. Human trafficking is a blight upon our society. It affects so, so many vulnerable people. It's important that we continue to look at all the options. We have to defend the most vulnerable in Saskatchewan, and so we welcome these changes.

Mr. Speaker, it seems that the bill in front of us ensures that debts that victims of human trafficking incur due to their human trafficking coercers, that these debts will not continue to haunt them after they are able to escape the vicious cycle of human trafficking. So important. Mr. Speaker, it's sad that the timing of this bill seems even more pertinent today than ever.

What really, really worries me though is that we always seem to have a government that only acts when pushed or shamed into doing so. They have to be pushed on every account when it comes to issues such as human trafficking or the above.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I promise that our opposition will continue to push this government to address the issues that are affecting vulnerable communities. I know that our critic will consult with stakeholders on this bill. So at this time I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 152, *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 152. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committee this afternoon and this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Government House Leader has

moved that this House does now adjourn. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:57.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Highways

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
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Hon. Dustin Duncan
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Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
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Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
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