



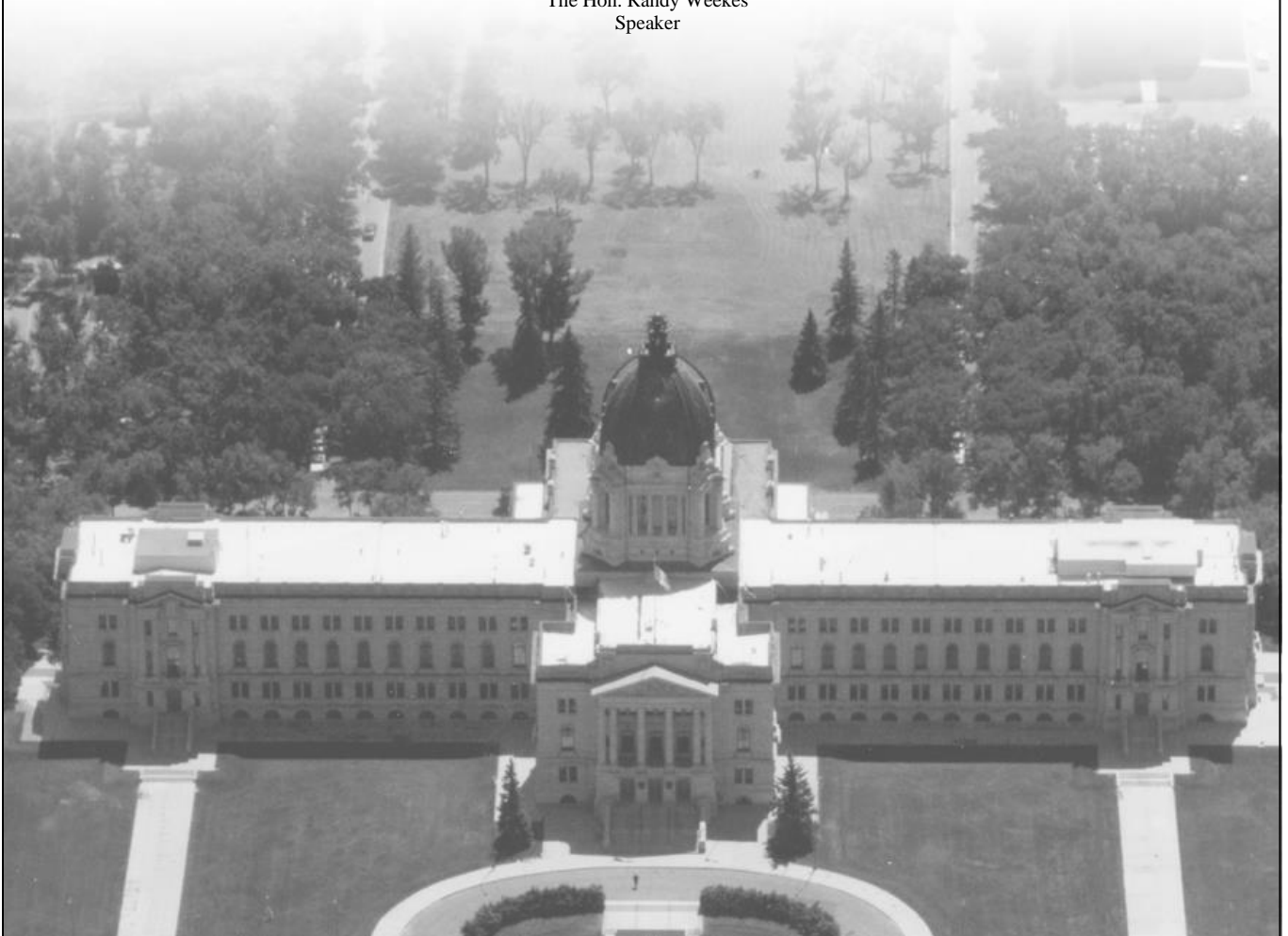
FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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) |
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| Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP) | Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP) |
| Clarke, Jared — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP) | Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP) |
| 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 Burianyak
Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Assembly, I would like to introduce to you 37 grade 12 students from Rosthern Junior College, Mr. Speaker. They're joined by Judy Epp, Mieke Malan, and Hamilton Fast, Mr. Speaker, also from the community. RJC, or Rosthern Junior College, is a high school located in the community of Rosthern, Mr. Speaker, has classes from 10 to 12 and has been educating students in that community for over 120 years, longer than we have been formally a province, Mr. Speaker.

RJC welcomes students, not only from across Saskatchewan, across Canada, and from literally around the world, and has alumni living around the world. And I bump into them from time to time, Mr. Speaker, when we are out discussing what it exactly is we do in Saskatchewan. I'm sure the member from Saskatoon Eastview will recognize some faces, as he had the opportunity to teach in that community, Mr. Speaker, and at the RJC.

I understand a number of years ago, a few years ago — and I've seen a couple of these games — high school sports has actually been merged with RJC and the public school in there. And it's the Rosthern Longhorns now, I believe, is the football team that I see hammering on our ever-ferocious Shellbrook Aardvarks from time to time, Mr. Speaker. But in the community of Rosthern, the Aardvarks is not something we brag about a lot, Mr. Speaker. Longhorns are much more formidable.

Mr. Speaker, in the community of Rosthern there's so much to do. In addition to all of the intramural sports and the opportunities through the schools that are there, including RJC, there's the Rosthern School of Dance, the minor hockey association. I understand there's been some significant renos to the rink there as well. There's an equestrian centre, Mr. Speaker. Really a beautiful community.

RJC's slogan — Imagine. Thrive. Explore. Belong. — Mr. Speaker, is certainly a slogan that these students will take as they finish school and enter their life contributing in the ways that we know they will. You can do each of these things as you attend RJC and are in the community of Rosthern.

So I would like all members here today to welcome these fine students from the community of Rosthern, from RJC, to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to introduce some guests seated in the east gallery to their Legislative Assembly: Miss Jenna Blaschuck and

her two children, Wrangler and Vienna. They are from Chaplin. And all the way from Big River, Ms. Rhonda Davidson and her daughter, Ms. Faith Davidson. Thank you all for travelling so far to visit with us today. I don't get visitors very often, so thank you. I know it's a journey.

I ask all members of this House to please join me in welcoming our guests to the people's House, their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Love: — 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. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Premier to follow up on his excellent introduction of these 37 students from Rosthern Junior College. And he's right, I've got lots to say. I'm glad to see how knowledgeable he is of this amazing school that's been educating young people in Saskatchewan, I think, since 1905. Just an incredible history, one of our four very important historical high schools in Saskatchewan.

Rosthern Junior College is the reason that I moved to Saskatchewan. And I'll correct the record a little bit. I didn't teach at the school; I worked in the dorm. And during that time there was a young man in the residence there as well as on the Rosthern Longhorns football team, which I was the first head coach of when those two schools came together. It's a great partnership between these schools to put the best team that the town of Rosthern could field on the team.

The young man on that team and in the dorm is in the gallery: Hamilton Fast, I'd like to welcome in particular. Just a great leader in that community. He's an avid cyclist, always up to adventures, and I'm sure he's well-liked and loved in the dorm and in the school as staff just as he was as a student.

There's one other familiar face up there that I've got to recognize. And she might shy away, but Ava Wood has been a lifelong friend of my family. And her family, her dad is Ryan Wood, former principal, current CEO [chief executive officer] of the school. Just an excellent leader in the community, across the province.

The Premier's correct. They welcome students from every corner of Saskatchewan, neighbouring provinces, and from around the world. They do such a great job providing inclusive, high-quality, excellent, and faith-filled education for the families that choose that school.

And I'd like to join with the Premier and welcome all members to join me in welcoming these 37 grade 12s, as well as all of the staff and chaperones that have joined them here today. Welcome

to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Lemaigre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very quickly, my children attended RJC school, and what an amazing school. And thanks to the staff, and I think my son was there when he was a dean at the dorm. And we've had some conversations of some of the things that my son got into that I won't get into here. But what an amazing school, and they set a strong foundation with their education. And very proudly, my son is a nurse now and a lot of his education is contributed to what he learned at RJC.

So congratulations to the students and thank you to the staff for all the work that they do. Thank you.

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

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you, through you, I would like to welcome 18 students of grade 10 from O'Neill High School in Regina Coronation Park. They are seated in the east gallery. These students are accompanied by their teacher, Ms. Kempling.

Mr. Speaker, we have really good memories, me and the member opposite from Regina Pasqua. We were teaching driver ed from time to time. A very good school, great spirit of sports. We see that they were doing a really amazing job at that time, and I guess it would be not changed. We were teaching at that time in 2022 . . . well 2019, somewhere like that, we were teaching in that school.

I will look forward to meeting with them after question period. I would request all members of this Legislative Assembly to give a warm welcome to all our future faces into their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to make an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure and honour to welcome several people seated in your gallery here this morning. First I'd like to introduce Simon Thomas, BHP president of potash here today.

Recently I had the opportunity to spend some quality time with Simon here during the hockey in the annual BHP Movember hockey game that took place in LeRoy last week. So both of us, Simon and I both had legitimate reasons why we weren't lacing up the skates that evening. But we certainly had an opportunity to have a great conversation. And I realized something. I realized we have so much in common. We have certainly in common a

lot of things. One in particular we certainly have in common, our love of sports and all things sports-related. But we also share a love of family.

And to that end it's an absolute joy to welcome Simon's family here with him today. I would like to introduce his wife, Jane. And, Jane, Simon had nothing but glowing things to say about you the other day at the rink. You're welcome, Simon, for that. And his two children, Henry and Grace. Give a wave there, folks.

Grace, I think, was a little bit under the weather that night, so I didn't actually get to meet Grace. I'm looking forward to meeting her after. But I was able to meet Henry. And Henry was working hard that night on his own hockey skills, and I think he's going to prove to be quite the talent. And he also shared, Henry also shared his excitement and enthusiasm for snow and looking forward to snow. And I don't share that same enthusiasm, Henry, but I certainly appreciate the joy that you have and seeing it through your eyes.

I would also like to welcome another member of Simon's family, and that being his BHP family: Maury Simoneau. Maury is the operations NPI [new product introduction] manager with BHP. And I've met Maury several times, and Maury is certainly an amazing man. He's truly a class act, and he's a driving force behind BHP's Movember cause. And, Mr. Speaker, he's quite the hockey player as well. I'll just point that out as well.

So with that I'd ask all the members to join with me in welcoming Simon, Jane, Henry, Grace, and Maury to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members, on behalf of the official opposition it's my pleasure as critic for Energy and Resources to join with the member from Arm River in welcoming Simon, Jane, Henry, Grace, and Maury to this, their legislature.

I don't have any hockey stories to share, Mr. Speaker. I'm a tragic, long-suffering Ottawa Senators fan, so the less said about that the better. But, Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about the importance of family, and I think that's really to the credit of BHP and everything that you do bring to this family.

You know, the member spoke about the building support that you do in your own family, and on behalf of the official opposition, I want to recognize not just the capital investments that you make in this province, but the social investments as well and the social licence with which you are operating here. That builds families across Saskatchewan.

And with that, on behalf of the official opposition I'd like to welcome you to this, your legislature.

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member from Arm River in welcoming Simon and his family to the Assembly. I wasn't able to attend the

hockey game, but I've gotten to know Simon fairly well over the last couple of years in his capacity as president of potash Canada for BHP. He's been absolutely terrific to work with, Mr. Speaker, very professional.

BHP, as everybody knows, employing thousands of people in the construction phase, hundreds of people permanently, and we were delighted not very long ago to hear the announcement about phase 2.

So I look forward to continuing to work with Simon on phase 3. And also I haven't had the opportunity to meet his family yet, but I'm looking forward to meeting them after question period.

So I'd ask all members, please give Simon and his family a warm welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask for leave for a slightly extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce a few people sitting in your gallery who are present here in honour of today's National Day of Action on Child Care.

The theme for this day here in Saskatchewan is Where's the Childcare? There are actions planned across 16 communities in Saskatchewan, and I want to start by welcoming a constituent of mine, Whitney Blaisdell. She's a Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] student at the University of Regina in the Faculty of Education. She works with, I think she's the founder of the Project Play YQR community-based organization here in Regina which came out of, I believe, some of the research she did.

She is doing research into play-based education, for lack of a better word, but it's so much more than that. She's interested in urban planning, in nature-centred design, playfulness, community, nature-based options, Mr. Speaker. She's also just a real presence in our community. She's always out with her kids. She's involved in many of the initiatives in our neighbourhood, and she's doing absolutely incredible work. So I just want to welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

[10:15]

She's seated beside Sheree Rieger, who's a public health nurse, who is a mother of two. She has served as a NICU [neonatal intensive care unit] nurse for years. She's currently a public health nurse and a tremendous advocate for affordable, accessible child care in our community. So I also want to welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

And then last but not least, Mr. Speaker, we have with us, Zinkal Joshi. She lives in Greens on Gardiner and we first met when she

reached out around the lack of child care options in that neighbourhood. We know that that is an area of the city that is growing substantially. I believe there's one licensed child care centre with a wait-list of 1,800. There's a few home-based options that are at capacity.

And Zinkal is an incredible advocate and is very articulate about expressing exactly what is on the table here, not only for kids getting a good start in life, for women in particular being able to return to the workforce with peace of mind, but also the fact that newcomers and immigrants need these options in order to sort of level the playing field, and you know, contribute to their success in our communities. We really need these accessible, affordable child care options. So it's been a real pleasure to meet her as a result of her advocacy, and I want to welcome her to this, her Legislative Assembly.

We will be joined by other guests later, but I wanted to start with these three, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I'd ask for leave for an extended introduction as well.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later today we'll be recognizing the first-ever recipients of the Lieutenant Governor's Post-Secondary Teaching Awards over at Government House. We'll hear a little bit more about those awards in an upcoming member's statement, but I'm happy to take this opportunity to introduce two of the recipients that are seated in your gallery who are accompanied by their guests.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Loleen Berdahl from the University of Saskatchewan is being presented with a Distinguished Teaching Award. This award recognizes a distinguished individual who shows commitment to teaching and student success, excellence in teaching practices that reflects the highest standards of adult learning, a record of outstanding teaching effectiveness, effective course design or program development, and the ability to foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Mr. Speaker, we also have Dr. Amber Fletcher from the University of Regina. Dr. Fletcher will be receiving the Innovative Teaching Award, which recognizes excellence in adult learning innovation. Adult learning innovation may refer to a number of innovative practices such as commitment to teaching and student success, excellence in teaching practices that reflects the highest standards of adult learning, a record of outstanding teaching effectiveness, effective course design or program development, and the ability to foster critical thinking and problem solving.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to help me congratulate and thank Dr. Berdahl and Dr. Fletcher for being exceptional

educators, leaders, and mentors for the students in Saskatchewan, and I would ask that we all welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Minister for Advanced Education opposite in welcoming these esteemed guests to their Legislative Assembly. In the areas of adult learning and post-secondary learning, you are true leaders in this province, and so I'd like to extend that congratulations on behalf of the opposition to Dr. Berdahl and Dr. Fletcher.

In this Assembly I believe we're all believers in lifelong learning at all stages of life, and it's always a pleasure to recognize leaders in this province at any stage in the continuum of learning. So on behalf of the opposition, I'd ask all members to join me in congratulating and welcoming these fine individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Premier and all of the members who have introduced guests here today, but I'd like to single out one guest, Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery and that is my mom, Judy Beck.

She also actually was an adult educator, someone who has volunteered all of her life, now retired, but probably like many, as busy as ever. She's a lay minister serving a number of local communities around home — Yellow Grass, Avonlea, Gray, I'm going to miss some.

Her and my dad run an outfitting business — I think this was year 26 — always a busy time in the fall for them. And they spend a lot of time . . . I often talk about how many kilometres I put on in my car in a year. I wouldn't even want to compare it to them. They chase grandkids, their 11 grandkids, all over the province, sometimes out of the province, for baseball and hockey and swimming, art classes, dance recitals, and the list goes on.

And I know I've introduced my mom before, but I think they've added something this year. Recently they've gone onto the Saskatchewan Baseball Hall of Fame board. So you know, this is something they do, continue to take on new roles in the community and certainly have set the bar very high for their kids and their grandkids in terms of community involvement.

She's brought her famous shortbread here today for members of caucus. I don't know if it's a naughty-and-nice list. If folks didn't get the shortbread, I guess they'll have to do better next year, Mr. Speaker.

But I will say this. I was thinking about this. You know, sometimes we think of strength in different ways, and I want to say my mom has an amazing, formidable combination of being tough as nails with a huge, empathetic heart. And she's set a heck of an example for all of us. Now I've made her cry, and I'm not going to cry.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to welcome all of the guests and my mom to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Leader of the Opposition in welcoming Judy Beck, her mother, to this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition, the opposition caucus and the governing caucus, we don't always agree on everything that's discussed on the floor of this Assembly, but I think that we can be very, very thankful that we live in a country where we agree on much more than we disagree on, Mr. Speaker. We're likely going to see a couple of those disagreements here shortly for about 25 minutes, Mr. Speaker.

But I always have faith and I think all in this province and this nation should have faith that there is much more that we agree on than we disagree on, and I think that we can be particularly thankful for that when we look at some of what is happening in other areas of the world today.

No one on the floor of this Legislative Assembly serves without the love and support of their family, their immediate family, and in particular I think their parents. I had the opportunity to meet Ray and Judy in days gone by. I want to today thank her for her support of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank both her and Ray for all they do in supporting the work that happens on the floor of this Legislative Assembly, and welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

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

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the official opposition has twice introduced paid sick leave legislation since the onset of the pandemic, calling for a minimum of 10 paid sick days each year, yet the Sask Party government has refused to pass that, even though it has been proven that paid sick leave legislation and paid sick leave in itself has been proven to save employers money while making workplaces healthier and safer for all workers.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, sadly 71 per cent of workers in Canada have experienced workplace violence and/or harassment, and much more needs to be done to ensure that workplaces in Saskatchewan are harassment free.

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

report incidents of violence and harassment in the workplace.

Those who've signed this petition today come from Bienfait and Griffin. I do so present.

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

Ms. Lambert: — 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 Saskatoon. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Raising Awareness on World AIDS Day

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow is World AIDS Day. It's a day to raise awareness of the AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome] pandemic and to mourn those lost to it. And Saskatchewan has many to mourn.

For years our province's HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] rates have been among the highest in Canada — 2, 3, 4, 5 times the national average. In 2021, 237 people were newly diagnosed with HIV. That's an all-time record. And amid these soaring numbers, that provincial government chose to restrict access to sexual education in schools, one of the proven best methods of lowering rates.

This isn't just statistics. It's about real people in our communities who deserve better. The government's failure to implement robust strategies for prevention, education, and support services is simply unacceptable. That they're cutting strategies already in place is inexcusable. It's time for accountability. We need a government that acknowledges the gravity of this situation and takes concrete steps to address it. The absence of meaningful action to combat HIV/AIDS is a blatant disregard for the well-being of Saskatchewan residents.

As World AIDS Day nears, I ask all members to join with me in calling for meaningful action to stop the rising tide of HIV in this province. AIDS is not over, and it never will be without action.

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

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Assembly today to recognize December 1st as World AIDS Day.

Every year we acknowledge World AIDS Day in efforts to raise awareness about the impact of HIV and AIDS on public health. On World AIDS Day we honour the lives of those affected by the virus, reflect on the progress made in the fight against HIV and AIDS, and recognize the challenges that still lie ahead.

Education is a powerful tool in our fight against HIV and AIDS. It is vital that we continue to educate our communities about prevention, testing, and treatment options. By promoting awareness, encouraging regular testing, and connecting those who test positive to treatment and care, we can ensure early detection and timely intervention, ultimately saving lives.

Stigma continues to be a significant barrier against our efforts to address HIV and AIDS, and we must continue to remove the prejudiced discrimination associated with this virus. In Saskatchewan we are committed to improving access to health care services for individuals with HIV and AIDS. We extend our gratitude to health care professionals, community organizations, and volunteers who dedicate their time and efforts to this important matter. Their contributions are invaluable in achieving a brighter future for those affected by this virus.

Mr. Speaker, today on World AIDS Day we unite in solidarity, compassion, and determination to make a lasting impact on those affected by AIDS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs Awards

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this fall, along with the member from Regina Pasqua, I had the pleasure of attending the Silver Spades SYPE [Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs] Awards on behalf of the Leader of the Official Opposition.

This award ceremony brings together outstanding young entrepreneurs, professionals from across this province, and it celebrates their hard work. Hosted at our beautiful Local Market and supported by the work of one of the best volunteer boards in all of Saskatchewan, this award ceremony was buzzing. It even had a champagne wall, which is pretty cool, Mr. Speaker.

[10:30]

The energy and enthusiasm and the joy that was present in that room was infectious and inspiring. And I want to thank the sponsor organizations and congratulate the winners: Young Professional of the Year, Arslan Azeem of Startup Saskatchewan; and the Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Rachel

Droege of Session YQR. I also want to recognize the nominees: Wura Dasyilva from Miller Thomson; and Kiran Vishwasrao from Edward Jones; Tanna Dietrich, Regina's own balloon queen from Balloon Bar YQR; and Austin Calladine and Casey Parker from Sweet Nutrition in Saskatoon; and Josh Stewart-Van Dusen from Tandem X Visuals.

I also want to shout out the organizers again, the inspiring and inclusive host, Talitha Smadu McCloskey. And the conversations that evening, Mr. Speaker, the warm support in that room is exactly what entrepreneurship is all about. And I ask all members to join me in congratulating SYPE and its winners on an award show well done.

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

Lieutenant Governor's Post-Secondary Teaching Award

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce the first recipients of the Lieutenant Governor's Post-Secondary Teaching Award today. This is the first provincial award in Saskatchewan to recognize post-secondary educators for their excellence, excellence in teaching and commitment to delivering quality education.

Mr. Speaker, the 2023 Lieutenant Governor Post-Secondary Teaching Award is presented in four categories. The inaugural recipients are Dr. Loleen Berdahl from the University of Saskatchewan for the Distinguished Teaching Award; Dr. Simonne Horwitz from the University of Saskatchewan for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Teaching Award; Dr. Cheryl Troupe from the University of Saskatchewan for the Indigenous Teaching Excellence Award; and Dr. Amber Fletcher from the University of Regina for the Innovative Teaching Award.

Mr. Speaker, these are but a few of the many exceptional educators in our post-secondary institutions across Saskatchewan. Nominated by their peers, these individuals continue to shape and mentor students, our future leaders. These recipients are more than deserving of our gratitude and recognition for their commitment to teaching excellence.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating these award recipients who are with us today and in thanking them for all that they do to educate and support Saskatchewan students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Thanks to All Medical Professionals

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since New Year's Eve of this year, I've been a patient in five Saskatchewan hospitals. They are Humboldt; Melfort; Royal University Hospital, Saskatoon; Regina Pasqua; and Regina General.

There was one factor that was common among all five hospitals. Mr. Speaker. It was the nurses and doctors. Their care and kindness was amazing. To all the nurses and doctors in all five hospitals, I would like to offer my most heartfelt thanks.

Mr. Speaker, I'll also comment on my recent car accident. I want

to commend the firefighters, paramedics, and ambulances who were there in mere minutes. All of these first responders provided exceptional care. By the time all was said and done, I had three ambulance rides. We can all be proud of the fine group of people who provided health care in our province.

Once again I would like to gratefully extend my thanks to all the nurses, doctors, firefighters, paramedics, and medical professionals that looked after me this year. It is due to their exceptional care that they provided me that I am able to be here today. I pray for God's blessing on all of the medical people in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Movember Classic Raises Funds for Men's Health

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday, LeRoy, Saskatchewan was again host to the annual BHP Movember Classic. It was a hard-fought battle, but with billions more in local BHP investments and the expanding contractor pool to draw from, team contractors are clearly improving, and we came up short in game number 5. Not to make excuses, but our very own five-point Francis was on the injury list, and our government line coach, the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, had something come up.

But while there are some good and creative excuses for not lacing on the skates, Mr. Speaker, we'll all have a hard time getting a doctor's note to skip our 50-year-male checkup. And there's no good reason not to reach out when struggling with our mental health.

Once again Maury Simoneau of BHP Team Movember worked hard to raise funds and awareness for men's health. Inspired by his brother's ongoing battle with cancer, Maury led the team and was seen this Movember running through Saskatchewan communities carrying the Movember flag in sometimes hardly more than a smile and a moustache.

So thanks to Maury and his team who played hard, gave of their time, and raised an amazing \$85,000 for the cause. Thanks to BHP for their commitment to Saskatchewan and her people. Thank you to all their staff, like Ann and Christine, Simon and Henry, who cheered us on and helped make the game a reality.

So as one more Movember draws to a close, men, we care. Reach out to a friend if you need or make that uncomfortable appointment. And if your wife is telling you, it's time to shave off that moustache. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Agricultural Solutions Company to Join Provincial Delegation at Sustainability Conference

Mr. Francis: — Mr. Speaker, I'm once again excited to highlight another great Saskatchewan agricultural success story. Hebert Grain Ventures operations has offices located in Fairlight, Moosomin, and Saskatoon, and span across several municipalities in southeast Saskatchewan. They have an unwavering passion for the future of agriculture and a love for solving the niche puzzles in the agricultural world.

Mr. Speaker, their winning attitude was instilled by their founders, and I quote, “Can’t is not an option. It’s a challenge.” And what a good attitude to have, Mr. Speaker. Hebert farm ventures has a mission to maintain the integrity and success of their operation for future generations. They believe in improving and utilizing two of our province’s greatest resources: people and the land.

Mr. Speaker, I’m pleased to announce that Hebert farm ventures will be part of our delegation joining our Premier at COP28 [Conference of Parties 28]. Kristjan Hebert and his team will have the opportunity to highlight all the innovative work they do to continuously improve our province’s strong agricultural sector. And we certainly can’t wait to see how Hebert farm ventures tells the story of Saskatchewan producers at this year’s COP28, along with 58 other companies and organizations joining the delegation at our pavilion, which according to the NDP is a waste of time and money. Mr. Speaker, I’m sure these 59 companies beg to differ. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Management of Health Care System

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, can the Premier update this Assembly? How many hospitals are on critical care bypass and turning patients away?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — I don’t have that number, Mr. Speaker, with me, but I can assure you it’s less than it was under the New Democrats.

Mr. Speaker, we have had a concerted effort over 16 years now, 16 years of investment in health care, not only in facilities. We were up at the urgent care centre here in Regina just the other day, Mr. Speaker, 85-per-cent-complete facility. A new and innovative way to deliver not only urgent care in our community and for surrounding communities but to also be an intake, a centralized intake for mental health and addictions challenges that we have in our communities, Mr. Speaker.

You’ve seen hospital after hospital being built. Most currently, Mr. Speaker, work being done on Weyburn, Yorkton, and at the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital. Added 5,000 nurses to those facilities, offering services to Saskatchewan residents; over 1,000 physicians, Mr. Speaker. And while we have the members from RJC here, I’d failed to mention a new hospital coming in Rosthern.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, with all the self-congratulations I think it will come as a surprise to this tired and out-of-touch government that they’re failing to deliver on health care. A leaked SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] document, Mr. Speaker, makes that crystal clear. From a memo, and this was sent yesterday, about critical care in Saskatchewan, I quote: “North Battleford, start bypass. Saskatoon, continue bypass. Yorkton, continue bypass. Moose Jaw, continue bypass.”

Mr. Speaker, how is it acceptable to this Premier for four different hospitals in this province to be on critical care bypass because of his mismanagement of our health care system?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we heard earlier this week and last week, some of the initiatives that . . . We heard from the Saskatchewan Health Authority some of the initiatives that they are taking to ensure that we have the resources available in our emergency rooms, Mr. Speaker, this fall as we find our way through flu season and other reasons that people are utilizing our hospitals.

I spoke in an earlier answer about the capital investment and the ongoing, at a high level, Mr. Speaker, over the last decade and a half, the investment that has resulted in more nurses and more physicians working in our facilities. We need more than that, Mr. Speaker, like all other provinces across Canada. The health human resource challenge that we have in Saskatchewan is not only in Saskatchewan. It’s not exclusive to our province.

I talk with other premiers on a weekly basis, Mr. Speaker, and all of the provinces and the three territories in our nation are working hard, and I would say, working collaboratively on how we can train more medical health professionals in our provinces to contribute not only to a stronger provincial health care system but a stronger national health care system.

We have in this province one of the most ambitious health human resource plans in the nation of Canada, Mr. Speaker. It’s one that we discuss at those national tables often. And it’s one that the Minister of Health mentioned earlier this week is really starting to show results in our communities — we need more results, admittedly, into the next number of months — with 870, 870 new grads, nursing grads that have been hired into the Saskatchewan Health Authority. They’ll be offering services in a Saskatchewan community. Plus over 400, 400 folks from the Philippines, Mr. Speaker, medical health professionals that are coming to Canada as well.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this Premier’s mismanagement of our health care system, it extends down here to Regina as well. Another internal memo, SHA document, this time an email. And it says this, I quote, Mr. Speaker:

Regina’s emergency departments are facing immediate capacity challenges and risk safe patient care. This is contributing to significant EMS offload delays, presenting a risk to those in the community as available EMS crews are reduced.

I end the quote, Mr. Speaker.

Why does this tired and out-of-touch government think that it’s acceptable in any way to risk safe patient care because of this Premier’s mismanagement of the health care system?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, this is not acceptable. This is

why you're seeing investment in the EMS [emergency medical services] services not just in Regina but across the province, Mr. Speaker, again which were discussed a day or two ago on the floor of this Assembly.

This is why you're seeing investments in our emergency care human resourcing efforts, which was announced by the Saskatchewan Health Authority just last week. This is why you're seeing investments like the urgent care centre on north Albert Street here in Regina — but another one coming in Saskatoon in a partnership with Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation — delivering services, urgent care services, non-life-threatening but urgent care services, relieving some of the pressures that we are seeing in our emergency rooms in our largest centres, Mr. Speaker.

Aside from that, having an intake, a centralized intake for those that may be having a mental health crisis, Mr. Speaker, may have entered a life of addictions unfortunately, and are ready to make a change. These are new and innovative ways to deliver health care in our communities, and these are new investments, continued new investments that are coming from the Government of Saskatchewan.

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

Access to Breast Cancer Diagnostic Services

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this is hardly a time for self-congratulations from that government. After 16 years this is their record, and nowhere is this tired and out-of-touch government's failure in health care more clear than when it comes to the mammogram policy announced yesterday.

Ten thousand fewer mammograms this year because of this government's utter mismanagement and chronic short-staffing. And now, Mr. Speaker, we're sending women to Calgary for a simple scan and procedures that they should be able to get here at home. Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely unacceptable.

Will the Premier show some contrition and apologize to the women of Saskatchewan who are paying the price for this government's mismanagement?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I had indicated before, these are unacceptable wait times for Saskatchewan women, and this is why — in addition to the longer term solution to hire the necessary specialized radiologists to provide these services here in Regina, here in southern Saskatchewan, closer to home — we're also taking immediate and urgent action to address the wait-list. Which is why, Mr. Speaker, yesterday and very quickly in recent days, our officials were able to work with a private provider, publicly funded in Calgary, to offer up to 1,000 different procedures, diagnostic mammograms, ultrasound imaging, and breast biopsy to give Saskatchewan women this option to be able to access the care that they need as quickly as possible.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would say this: one of the women who I met with as the minister, Jodi Krechowicki, had said yesterday, "The government's urgent action to ensure timely diagnosis for

patients is welcome news to Saskatchewan women." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Here's a news flash for that minister and that Premier: this is not a good-news story. It's an indictment of that government's record when it comes to women's health in this province.

[10:45]

Mr. Speaker, they have let short-staffing become the norm — 10,000 fewer scans this year than last year. And this government, so focused on their own pet projects, they have let it come to this point, Mr. Speaker. Instead of focusing on Dubai, the Premier should be focused on ensuring that women in this province can get the care they need where they need it.

Again will the Premier or that minister apologize to the women of this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government will not apologize for the actions that we have taken yesterday and the future actions that we will take, the investments we have made into health care, significant investments into this area, Mr. Speaker.

You know what, we're not going to apologize for the investment yesterday. We're not going to apologize for any of the investments that we have made into health care, from meeting with Saskatchewan women to meeting with health care providers to look at all options to address these waiting lists, Mr. Speaker.

I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition, she's had plenty of opportunity here to outline her plan. As recently as yesterday, she was asked by the media in Saskatoon, are there any immediate or definitive actions you could start to take to alleviate this problem? And what did the Leader of the Opposition say, Mr. Speaker? Well she kind of hummed and hawed a bit and said things like, well one of the things that we have heard from health care workers is they have ideas; they have solutions; you know, there's a lot of people leaving the health care system that can't find a job.

But there's been no plan from that Leader of the Opposition, plan-to-fail, fail-to-plan NDP across the way.

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

Information Reported in Public Accounts and Emergency Hotel Stays

Ms. Conway: — Sixteen years, Mr. Speaker, now a 16-hour drive. It's so disappointing.

Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing to deliver for Saskatchewan women, and they're failing when it comes to basic accountability and transparency. The Ministry of Social Services, the minister has said that \$172,000 was spent on

the Sunrise Motel just last year, 172,000 paid out to his colleague, the member for Regina Northeast. But the Public Accounts volume 2 report for that year shows none of that, Mr. Speaker. No payments to the Sunrise Motel. No payments to Grewal Hospitality Inc.

To the minister: why not?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, in terms of information gathering, the ministry is working very hard to get the information noted from the member opposite, and that work is under way.

Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor, as I had mentioned the other week, will look into the procedure around securing hotels in her annual audits. And that is my understanding from officials that have let me know that. So again our priority is to ensure everyone has safe access to shelter and a warm, safe place. That's the side we're going to err on, Mr. Speaker, in dealing with hotels in emergency situations.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, it's been more than two weeks that we've been asking these questions and nothing from this minister. He didn't touch the question. \$172,000, that's a lot of nights at \$200 a night that this ministry paid out to his colleague, the member from Regina Northeast. It's a basic question that the minister should be able to answer. It's basic transparency for public dollars, something this tired and out-of-touch government has no interest in.

The Public Accounts are supposed to list every person or vendor paid more than \$50,000 in a fiscal year. The minister says \$172,000 was paid, more than three times that threshold, Mr. Speaker. Why doesn't it show up in Public Accounts? What is the Sask Party hiding?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, not hiding anything. We've committed to getting the specific information. In terms of how it's presented in Public Accounts, I can certainly look into that. In a general sense there are large general categories, Mr. Speaker. But again, we've committed to look at those numbers.

And it is a process to go through and the member knows any time there's a freedom of information or written questions, it does take time to get those numbers available. We committed to do that. The work is under way, Mr. Speaker. So again the Provincial Auditor has indicated to officials that she is going to look into this matter as she does in her regular submissions, Mr. Speaker. So that work is under way.

And the member — that that member talked about — on this side, my understanding, will meet with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to look into this matter as well.

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

Support for Child Care

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the public accounts process is straightforward. This is highly suspect, and it's disappointing not to hear any answers from that minister. Mr. Speaker, they're failing on transparency.

They're also failing on child care. We're joined today by advocates for child care in Saskatchewan. Later we'll be joined again from the director of Wiggles and Giggles, who's no stranger to this place, who still can't staff her centre. This isn't just an education issue. It's a cost-of-living issue for families. It's an economic issue for women who want to get back into the workforce. It's essential to the future of our province.

The deal the Sask Party signed with the feds calls for 28,000 additional child care spaces by the end of 2026. The clock is ticking, Mr. Speaker, and to date only 4,696 new spaces have been created, and only just over 2,000 of those spaces are actually operational.

When will this government actually deliver the child care spaces that people need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the opposition to say that this is a government that doesn't care about child care in this province is absolutely rubbish. And this is a government that in this fiscal year is investing nearly \$400 million in early learning and child care operations around the province, Mr. Speaker.

Just earlier this month, Mr. Speaker, I stood beside Glen McCallum, president of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, to announce that we have invested \$23 million to open up 2,300 new child care spaces all across the province. We have fantastic partners like the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. I was at the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] facility down on south Albert Street yesterday. Again we have some excellent partners in child care as we continue to build the spaces and build the sector here in Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. Conway: — There's no denying it. I mean the photo ops, the headlines, they're great at that, Mr. Speaker. But the reality on the ground is anything but: 92 per cent of kids in this province live in child care deserts. And we'll be hearing from the author of that report later today. Only 7.5 per cent of the spaces they've committed to are fully operational, Mr. Speaker.

It means parents like Zinkal, like Sheree, a public health nurse, can't access \$10-a-day daycare. Sheree pays three times that for a part-time spot. And she has to ask herself whether she needs to leave the health care workforce to make this work, Mr. Speaker. It's not acceptable. Access to a wait-list is not access to child care.

Will the minister guarantee today that these 28,000 spaces that were promised will actually be up and running? Because with the way things are going, it certainly doesn't look like it.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, we have numerous excellent partners across the province as we work to expand child care availability across the province. You know, when it comes to staffing, we've announced wage enhancements. We have tuition-free education . . . Mr. Speaker, I'd love to answer the question, but the opposition continue to interrupt me at every opportunity.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in contrast, Saskatchewan had the worst, the poorest record on child care under the NDP. And that was by admission of their own Finance minister at the time, who admitted that their government didn't make any investments into child care. Contrast this with our government, Mr. Speaker, announcing new spaces often. We're going to continue to make investments to grow the sector. Thank you.

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

Attendance at Conference of Parties 28

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This tired and out-of-touch government isn't focused on the things that matter to people. They're not focused on health care. They're not focused on the cost of living. But they've got a lot of time and a lot of money for the Premier's big trip to Dubai. Nearly a million dollars for a pavilion in Dubai while investments are badly needed in health care and education. The cost of that pavilion could pay for 300 mammograms instead of being wasted.

How does the Minister of Trade and Export Development justify wasting these dollars in Dubai when they're needed in health care?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP demonstrate day after day after day why they have no credibility on any economic questions. We announced that we were going to talk about our sustainable industries. We had initially 45 companies that signed up to come along, Mr. Speaker, with the government. Since the NDP have started talking about what a terrible waste this is, 13 more have signed up to come and tell their story about their sustainable energy production, their sustainable agriculture production. A story, Mr. Speaker, that they clearly don't want told and a story that clearly Justin Trudeau, Steven Guilbeault, Jagmeet Singh, and those members opposite are doing all they can to prevent being told internationally.

We are not going to apologize for working with our companies, for working with our entrepreneurs, and having that message told right around the world, including at COP28, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Mr. Speaker, that minister sat as an opposition member in parliament from 2004 to 2006. He had a front-row seat to see what happens when a tired and out-of-touch

government believes it's entitled to its entitlements. He should know better than anyone about how bad that looks.

This week we learned that the Saskatchewan Research Council is sending a delegation to Dubai. SRC [Saskatchewan Research Council] is of course owned by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, and Saskatchewan people will be on the hook.

How many other Crowns and government agencies are going with the Premier's entourage? And how much is this going to cost Saskatchewan people?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, you better believe SRC is going to COP28 to talk about the incredible work that they are doing in sustainable energy production.

We had an amazing announcement earlier this week. The government is working with SRC, working with Westinghouse Electric to produce the world's very, very first microreactor right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

What you would expect to hear from the members opposite would be support. But we didn't, Mr. Speaker, because they oppose this, in addition to any nuclear value-added, any uranium value-added.

We are going to be going to COP28. SRC is going to be, with Westinghouse, with Cameco, with other uranium companies, nuclear companies, Mr. Speaker, telling our story to the world because it's a great one to tell.

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

Provincial Education Assessments

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last session I brought up the growing issue of students being left behind in our education system, with an increasing number of students falling below the grade level requirements.

Our provincial grade levels in math, science, and reading are all below the national average. Again one-third of Saskatchewan students in grade 3 are not meeting the minimum grade level requirements. In the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division report of 2022, it found a shocking 50 per cent of grade 3 students are below the reading grade level. Mr. Speaker, this issue is only getting worse, not better. It has measurable impacts on students' well-being and their future success.

The government has had months to investigate this serious issue since I raised it last session. What are their findings, Mr. Speaker? Where have they been dropping the ball to let so many students fall through the cracks?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, the learning results and the competitiveness of our students is something that this government and our Ministry of Education takes quite seriously.

Mr. Speaker, we know that during the pandemic it was a challenging time for students, a challenging time for parents and teachers alike. I'm proud to say that since the end of the pandemic, our grade 3 reading results have improved. We continue to focus on that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd point the member opposite to the provincial education plan that we released several weeks ago endorsed by all 27 school divisions. One of those priority areas was learning and assessment, Mr. Speaker, and that talked about our government's focus on improving results of students and ensuring that we have robust learning opportunities for children around the province wherever they go to school. Thank you.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two families here today that have experienced the failure of the public education system. Ms. Jenna Blaschuck and her children, Ms. Faith Davidson and her parents. They have both experienced the shortcomings of the education system's ability to help students reach their grade level requirements.

Both families have found success outside of the public system, drastically improving grade scores and academic performance. Mr. Speaker, these options are costly, very costly, and force parents to pay out of pocket to help their children receive the basic education that they deserve.

I have two questions for the minister. When will this government put proper assessment tools in place to make sure parents can trust that their children are not left behind? And secondly, will the minister meet with these two families to discuss their concerns about the public system and how it's failing their students and the families?

[11:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'd be pleased to meet with the guests after question period and discuss their concerns and their ideas on how to improve our education system, Mr. Speaker.

Respond to the member opposite, as I outlined, in our provincial education plan, learning and assessment, one of our key priority areas, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to working with our school divisions and sector partners in the educational sector on assessment over the next several years. We look forward to making sure that we have the right assessment tools in place to really ensure that our students are competitive in the global marketplace. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Federal-Provincial Relations and Opposition's Viewpoints

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week Alberta premier Danielle Smith invoked the Alberta sovereignty Act, telling the Prime Minister, no, his energy regulations are

unconstitutional.

In contrast what did we see out of this liberal government opposite? They decided to create a tribunal committee spanning multiple years to study the economic effects of Trudeau's energy regulations. They even plan to consult Ottawa on the matter to "look at all the angles," Mr. Speaker. While Alberta takes action, this government is once again failing to stand up for Saskatchewan while spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to study the impact of Trudeau's unconstitutional demands.

Why can't the Premier take some direction from his counterpart in Alberta and just say no, just say no to Ottawa?

The Speaker: — I understand — I didn't hear it — but you referred to the government as the liberal government. So I just want to caution and make sure you identify the parties properly. Going to answer the question? I recognize the Premier

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of a liberal government in the province of Saskatchewan, I'll take that question.

Mr. Speaker, most certainly I wish the member the very best of luck. It sounds to me like she might be running in the next school board election as opposed to the provincial election.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address a number of things that have risen over the course of the last week. We often talk about, you know, what the NDP government did a decade and a half ago. Just last week we've seen in health care the discussion around unprecedented investment in this province. The NDP opposition gets up and say, that's not enough. But yet they have no plan. When it comes to supports for our communities' most vulnerable, they get up, they say, that's not enough. Yet they have no plan. It comes to child care, a rare point where the Government of Saskatchewan did work with the federal Liberal government with unprecedented investment, NDP say, that's not enough. Yet they have no plan, Mr. Speaker.

And then when the economic update comes around, they say, whoa, whoa, whoa; that's too much; you need to cut back on supporting agriculture and farmers in this province. Rip up the GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] contracts like they did years ago. That's the only advice we have seen from the opposition this week, Mr. Speaker. And they are going to be opposition for a very, very long time.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

The Speaker: — State your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. During question period the member for Regina Elphinstone repeatedly referred . . . Under rule 20(2), and I would cite your deeply considered and significant ruling that was very clear and definitive last Thursday, Mr. Speaker: "You're not to refer to another party's caucus, what they do, at all."

The member repeatedly referred to caucus matters. She needs to stand in her place, withdraw, and apologize.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the member's question. It was clearly about the spending of government funds. If anything, this is a debatable fact and it should be . . . The member opposite should know that and, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask you to find that this point is not well taken.

The Speaker: — Taken under advisement.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Economy Committee.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Ms. C. Young: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy 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 the Economy be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on the Economy 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 Chair of the Crown and Central Agencies committee.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its eighth report. I move:

That the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved:

That the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies 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.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Provincial Response to Federal Energy Policies

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure being on my feet as we enter into debate. I want to bring some comments forward about the economic assessment tribunal and put them on the record. I was very interested in learning the composition of the tribunal, and I genuinely think the Minister of Justice and cabinet did a fantastic job of putting together an informed, knowledgeable, and educated group of individuals from a cross-section of society. There's lawyer Michael Milani, King's Counsel, he's the Chair; Dr. Janice MacKinnon, former politician and a university professor, Vice-Chair; Ken From, engineer and former CEO of SaskEnergy; and Dr. Stuart Smyth, a university professor in the department of agricultural and resource economics at the University of Saskatchewan.

Lastly I was honestly excited to see one person on the tribunal, someone I don't know, but reading her biography I thought this was an excellent fit for this team. Estella Petersen is a heavy equipment operator working at Suncor in Fort McMurray. She's originally from Cowessess First Nation, and the blue-collar perspective that she will bring to the tribunal will be invaluable. This province was built by people who work with their hands, and I am a strong advocate for all tradespeople. And appointing Estella Petersen to this tribunal shows all of Canada just how much this government respects our skilled workforce.

This will not be another government bureaucracy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This will be an informed, educated, and knowledgeable board able to gather information and make recommendations. Their insights, knowledge, and broad base of lived experiences will be invaluable to the tribunal and beneficial to the people of Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan First Act is critically required now in this political environment. Our Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, and his Environment minister, Steven Guilbeault, have aspirations that seem to have no end. Whether it's the plastic ban, which the courts have ruled unconstitutional . . . And I'm going to practise a little bit of self-restraint right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because all of my colleagues know how much I despise paper straws. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the clean fuel standards, the clean electricity regulations, upcoming emission regulations on our oil and gas industry, fertilizer emission reductions — there is no boundary that they will not cross in their quest for environmental virtue-signalling supremacy.

Standing up for Saskatchewan is not a pointless crusade like the members opposite criticize us about, but is something that we have to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The federal government is missing so many economic opportunities to collaborate with Saskatchewan. We have so much to offer in this province, yet they prefer to hinder any growth for Western Canada. We cannot depend on the federal government to tell Saskatchewan's story and we would not be doing our job if we did not advocate for all Saskatchewan residents.

The Federal Court ruling recently quashing the federal cabinet order that listed plastic manufactured items as being deemed toxic is a tremendous victory, showing that some disputes can be won.

There are two points, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I really want to make crystal clear. Natural resource development and electrical generation are strictly under provincial purview. Our Constitution under section 92 is quite clear about this. There's no legitimate reason why the federal government insists on — putting it bluntly, Mr. Deputy Speaker — putting its nose where it doesn't belong. As a province we have stringent environmental standards that all of our energy producers and electrical generators adhere to, so that's not the reason. It has to be purely political and primarily ideologically driven.

And that's why *The Saskatchewan First Act* is so critically needed at this point in time to defend our industries, which have the highest environmental and social guidelines compared to anywhere else in the world. And protecting those industries, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's really about protecting Saskatchewan people.

I wonder why some federal politicians who have no interest in seeing Saskatchewan people succeed locally, nationally, and internationally dream up policies that adhere to their activist ideals. Well I do know a reason. I recall federal minister Gudie Hutchings stating the West should elect more Liberal MPs [Member of Parliament]. I guess that would be their reasoning.

Still, *The Saskatchewan First Act* can be used through our legal system to provide some form of checks and balances. The opposition members always say, I heard this while door knocking or I heard that, which is always negative toward this government, contrary to what I hear. I want to inform the members today that most are positive towards this government. We have issues we have to work on; there's no debating that.

But most people cannot tolerate the overbearing federal coalition government. People are feeling the inflationary pressures resulting from terrible mismanagement of federal fiscal policies and feeling the real pain of federal environmental policy that does little to help the environment, but does a lot to destroy people's disposable income.

The second point I want to bring forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the importance of the economic assessment tribunal. These highly skilled appointees' primary duty will be to answer the question that I always ask: what is the cost? Saskatchewan people need to be informed on what policy Y will cost amount X. This is critical to inform decision makers, policy proponents, and the general public. Everything we do has a cost. Let's try to quantify what that cost will be.

The members opposite complain incessantly about affordability issues. They're not wrong. I remember very clearly a former Saskatchewan minister of the Environment years ago making a statement that the carbon tax brought in by the federal Liberal government, fully supported by the NDP, will be inflationary and drive up the price of everything. Truer words have never been spoken. We are living through those repercussions right now.

In hindsight, if the economic tribunal had been around, could they have looked at this policy and informed the people that these would be the consequences of that policy? Would people have voted for it, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

[11:15]

On Tuesday the Minister of Justice spoke in her ministerial statement about having the economic tribunal assess the federally imposed clean electricity standards. This was great news to hear. Their report will be interesting to read. But just from anecdotal evidence the Premier's statement about running our coal-fired electrical generating fleet that's end-of-life will provide Saskatchewan ratepayers with millions of dollars of savings on their power bills.

Saskatchewan people invested in these facilities and we need to recoup that full investment to its total value. Our new natural gas generating facilities, which typically have a lifespan of over 40 years, would have to be shut down by 2035 according to the existing federal regulations, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The federal government gives a long explanation stating that that's incorrect. Jurisdictions can run them as so-called peaker plants to back up the unreliable renewables, but the costs would be very high. Not running facilities to their full potential is very cost prohibitive. They are also demanding carbon capture technology be added to these facilities which is . . . No gas plant in the world has had any of that done before, and it would add more expense to these plants which has to be passed on to the end consumer, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Our society, businesses, and industries need an affordable electrical grid to remain competitive on the global stage. Saskatchewan has a role to play in renewable electrical generation like wind and solar, but these present challenges. Their inherent unreliability requires electrical generators to have backup capacity in place to maintain base load generating capability.

Many of the products we grow, mine, and produce here are sold internationally, and we must do as much as we can as a government to keep our production costs low for all of our stakeholders. This government has a vision to be net zero by 2050. We cannot put Saskatchewan people at risk. We cannot risk the affordability and reliability of our provincial power grid to attempt to appease the federal government's unrealistic targets to achieve their clean electricity regulations.

We are very interested in new emission-free nuclear technology like the small modular reactor currently under construction in Darlington. But we have to balance the reality of this. It's the first commercial SMR [small modular reactor] being built anywhere in the world. It's projected to be producing electricity by 2029, with the reality we need power now, each and every day.

We will continue monitoring Ontario's power generation progress and look forward to its successful completion. The economic tribunal will have the opportunity to look at the big picture and delve into the costs and how they will affect Saskatchewan people, businesses, and industries, Mr. Deputy Speaker. *The Saskatchewan First Act* is necessary to defend Saskatchewan interests and the economic assessment tribunal is critical to quantify the costs associated with all policy directions.

There are amazing things happening in our First Nations community in the energy sector, the forestry sector, and the mining sector. Thirty per cent of Saskatchewan's timber harvest is allocated to Indigenous businesses, the highest proportion of any province. Saskatchewan has the only 100 per cent owned-and-operated First Nations saw mill in Canada, NorSask Forest Products.

No one wants to jeopardize any of that. We want to protect this work and the fantastic things happening in First Nations communities all across the province. We cannot stress this enough. *The Saskatchewan First Act* will protect all of Saskatchewan's interests.

I just want to talk for a second about a NexGen uranium project that recently received ministerial approval on November 8th. My colleague did a member's statement on it. This project is enormous for Saskatchewan and for Canada. It will be the largest uranium mining project when it comes online. This mine could produce over 23 per cent of the world's uranium in the first few years of production. This is a great story to be told, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Unfortunately the federal government is choosing yet again to stand in the way of another economic opportunity for the province, especially in northern Saskatchewan, First Nations and Métis people. As the member from Athabasca mentioned yesterday in his member's statement, this project has the potential to create tons of jobs and provide access to education opportunities for First Nations, Métis Nation, and other communities. It will help strengthen all local communities.

The federal government needs to do what is right and approve this project. Infringing on economic opportunities for Saskatchewan people seems to be the federal government's new hobby. We are hopeful that the federal government will do the right thing and see this project through its final stages.

I'm running low on time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I want to end my comments on one last note. I was watching the national news the other night, and there was a story about charitable donations in Canada. Historically around 36 per cent of the population donates to a charity, and that has dropped dramatically to around 28 per cent. This is a very sad statistic as we enter the holiday season when most people typically think about donating to charities.

I really believe that this is a symptom of the federal government's consistent overreach on taxing energy, and how that affects every person across the province and across the country. Energy is life. Our modern society requires it. No one wants to take a step backward in time and go without it. Taxing energy, in whatever form it's in, disproportionately affects our seniors, our young people, and our low-income earners.

I've said this dozens of times in this Chamber, Mr. Deputy Speaker: taxing people to heat their homes in this country is morally wrong. And this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will always stand up for Saskatchewan people, businesses, and industries no matter who governs in Ottawa.

I want to thank the Premier for his vision moving forward; the Minister of Justice for implementing *The Saskatchewan First Act*, building the tribunal and that team and bringing that all together. And I want to thank all of my caucus colleagues for their unwavering support of this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'm going to read the motion into the record now:

That this Assembly calls upon the Government of Saskatchewan to continue with the broad efforts and years of government advocacy work which led to *The Saskatchewan First Act*, which will stand up for and assert Saskatchewan's exclusive provincial jurisdiction over non-renewable natural resources and the operation of sites and facilities for electrical energy production and generation; and further,

That this Assembly condemns the Liberal-NDP federal government's proposed clean electricity regulations, oil and gas cap, and federal fuel standards as unconstitutional, uneconomical, and a clear violation of provincial rights.

I do so submit, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood:

That this Assembly calls upon the Government of Saskatchewan to continue with the broad efforts and years of government advocacy work which led to *The Saskatchewan First Act*, which will stand up for and assert Saskatchewan's exclusive provincial jurisdiction over non-renewable natural resources and the operation of sites and facilities for electrical energy production and generation; and further,

That this Assembly condemns the Liberal-NDP federal government's proposed clean energy regulations, oil and gas cap, and the federal fuel standard as unconstitutional, uneconomical, and a clear violation of provincial rights.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? 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 debate, although I think I'm losing count how many times in different word-salad options we've been forced to debate these very similar, similar issues over and over. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if it's not the federal carbon tax or the *Impact Assessment Act*, no-more-pipelines bill, it's clean electricity regulations, oil and gas caps, or federal fuel standards.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's be very clear. Saskatchewan New Democrats have been very clear on this side of the House, and I think the members opposite should take a quick listen here. We

do not support the unrealistic timelines laid out by Ottawa as they pertain to clean electricity standards. We do not support the federal carbon tax as a climate change solution in Saskatchewan.

We have been so clear for a made-in-Saskatchewan plan that takes into account Saskatchewan's unique needs. And we do not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, support federal intrusion where no consultation has taken place to address the unique needs of Saskatchewan families, Saskatchewan producers, and energy industry as it pertains to these clean electricity standards, gas caps, and clean electricity regulations.

We are very concerned about the potential costs incurred by Saskatchewan families if such policies with such unrealistic timelines are forced on Saskatchewan residents and are forced to continue to move forward.

Would these targets have been easier to achieve if the Saskatchewan Party government had been doing their part for the last 16 years? Maybe. But we have seen a government that has done absolutely nothing on the climate file for the last 16 years they have been in government, leaving us in a very tenuous position to the rest of the country.

We've been clear in our demands that the provincial and federal government get to the table, act like adults, and find a solution that works for Saskatchewan.

But that leads us here today, once again debating a motion as we have very similarly in the past. All while important topics should be discussed, we continue to beat these ones into the ground, ignoring the opportunities to debate so many more important issues — topics such as the crushing cost of living and the further inaction by the Saskatchewan Party on that front; the health care staffing crisis, both urban and rural, made worse by the Sask Party government's underfunding and under-support.

We could be debating the state of our second-last-in-the-country economy, the six-year record of this Premier achieving the second-worst-in-the-country GDP [gross domestic product] growth, or the absolutely worst-in-the-country job creation record.

As critic for Tourism Saskatchewan, we could be debating the Statistics Canada report released yesterday showing that Saskatchewan was the only province in the country to see a decline in foreign resident spending, while nine other provinces in Canada saw that spending almost double year over year. We could be debating the causes of a \$250 million deficit and how the government lost \$1.5 billion since their last budget. All things we could be debating on the floor of this Chamber.

But it's clear that this very tired and very out-of-touch government has only one speed — fight the feds and storm off like children when they don't get their way. They are not listening to the people of Saskatchewan calling on them to take action on these important topics, and they're certainly not listening to this opposition. We have said over and over again that we are opposed to the policies laid out in these motions by the federal government.

Today we enter into debate on the merits of *The Saskatchewan First Act* and a debate to condemn those federal government

policies. Mr. Speaker, it's clear that these policies do not work for the people of Saskatchewan. They don't work for our producers and they do not work for our unique energy industry.

Unlike this government, a Saskatchewan NDP government would never sit back while the federal government in Ottawa forges ahead with plans that will increase the cost-of-living burden on Saskatchewan families and small businesses. No matter who governs in Ottawa, we will always stand up for Saskatchewan interests. That's what the people of Saskatchewan want from their leaders. They want adults in the room, not children.

It's clear that both this Saskatchewan Party government and the federal government are failing Saskatchewan people on these fronts. They have failed to consult, and they're not listening. On the climate crisis, of which these policies are supposed to address, this Saskatchewan Party provincial government has failed Saskatchewan people by not coming up with a valid climate policy and left the province vulnerable to the whims of Ottawa.

We know that climate change is a real concern. I hear it on the doorsteps, and you only have to ask those folks who had to flee their homes this summer because of the devastating forest fires and choking smoke. You only had to talk to the producers of our province who are experiencing crippling drought for years now and are struggling to feed their livestock.

Saskatchewan people in every corner of the province are looking for leadership on these issues, leadership that will take into account the unique needs of their province, that considers producers, our energy industry, and our energy mix. Saskatchewan people are looking for ways to reduce their emissions, reduce the impacts of climate change while keeping their power bills affordable. They're looking for common-sense, prairie-driven solutions to a climate crisis because Saskatchewan people have always punched well above their weight. And we know the important global role that we in Saskatchewan play as being a food basket to the world and providing sustainable energy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan people are demanding action from their provincial government to stop the petty fights, get to the table, and get to work on building solutions for the people of this province. But they're simply not seeing that leadership from this provincial government, and they're certainly not seeing that leadership come from the federal government who continues to brush aside the unique needs of our province.

[11:30]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to the provincial-federal relationship, the Saskatchewan Party government has failed the people of Saskatchewan by not being at the table to negotiate a better deal for Saskatchewan people when it comes to the federal government's climate plans. They have burned political capital. They have walked out of meetings and said they just don't care. They have snubbed federal counterparts and been snubbed back. They have acted like children and in doing so are putting Saskatchewan people on the hook for their failures. From the climate crisis to Saskatchewan's unique needs, when it comes to reducing emissions and keeping our economic engines alive, the

Saskatchewan Party government has failed.

And, Mr. Speaker, the federal government is just as much to blame in this situation. The federal government under Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party have not taken into account the unique needs of Saskatchewan's resource economy, our producers, our energy industry, and our energy mix. They have shown that when it comes to votes, they are happy to carve out one portion of the country and leave the rest to pick up the bill.

Worse yet, Liberal ministers have said the terribly quiet part out loud, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They have given the exact same response that this Premier gave in the Athabasca by-election: elect more Liberals, and maybe we'll think about helping your area of the country. No government should say that out loud. Any government should be working for every single person in their province and in their country, no matter who represents them.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to clean electricity standards, the Liberal government is putting the cart before the horse. They are laying out unreasonable timelines as it pertains to an energy transition, without putting forth any solutions or any dollars on the table for provinces to look at options for different energy needs. They have not taken into account the unique energy mix we have here in Saskatchewan and have given no interest in discussing potential costs associated which will indeed be passed on to Saskatchewan families and small businesses.

And that is our main concern here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We want to ensure that Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan families, and Saskatchewan small businesses are not saddled with power bills that will triple under these unreasonable expectations, unreasonable timelines. We need to get to the table and we need to express our unique needs. We need to express our unique energy mix, our unique producer situations to this federal government. We need a provincial government who will take leadership and get to that table.

As I've said, the rising costs for families and small businesses are not something that we can support — full stop. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan people need to heat their homes, they need to put food on the table, all without breaking the bank. They are demanding action on a climate file and they are demanding action on the cost-of-living crisis. We must find a balance on both, and Saskatchewan New Democrats are ready for the challenge. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Jensen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm so happy to be able to enter into this debate on a motion that my colleague from Last Mountain-Touchwood described so well in his remarks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan people and increasingly more and more Canadians as a whole are fed up. They're fed up with the Liberal-NDP coalition that is Justin Trudeau and Jagmeet Singh. People I talk to are fed up with all the ideologically driven legislation, policies, and regulations coming from Ottawa without consideration for the ramifications for our economy, and just as importantly the cost to individuals and families across our province. After all, it was our Prime Minister

who himself asked for forgiveness because he doesn't think about fiscal policy. And he still thinks the budget is going to balance itself.

We've seen the utter incompetence of the federal government on display pretty much every day. But you know things are getting bad and they're only getting worse, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when one looks at the country's credit card. It's been used so much that the numbers are worn right off, the magnetic strip is gone, and the microchip is begging for mercy. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gets worse. The printing press is almost out of ink and the mill is quickly running out of paper.

The federal coalition has all but maxed out the country's credit card and the presses are running nearly dry but they're not going to stop there. Trudeau and Singh have had their hands in the back pockets of Canadians for a while now. And while the printing press is drying up, they are now reaching into wallets and purses of Canadians, not with one hand but with both, to pay for their patently unachievable schemes.

The federal government is pursuing an ideological dream without any consideration for the inflationary hurt and mental anguish it's causing people in our province as well as those across the country. I point no further than to the federal government's proposed clean electricity regulations, or CER. It's simply not achievable to rely on renewables such as wind and solar for baseload power. And if small modular reactors are found to be the most reliable and effective baseload power solution, we cannot possibly have that capacity built out in time for the unilaterally imposed deadline of net zero electricity generation by 2035.

A bridge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is needed to get us to 2050, but it appears the federal government is wilfully blind to having that discussion. Mr. Guilbeault has demonstrated time and time again that it's full steam ahead regardless of the consequences, and Justin and Jagmeet are right there on each side supporting him.

As a government we're not going to put the personal safety of our residents at risk — especially in the cold, dark, and mostly windless winter months — in order to satisfy the fantasy of net zero electrical generation in such a short time, a fantasy that industry experts have concluded is unattainable and unaffordable in Saskatchewan before the federally imposed date of 2035 and, in the case of coal-produced electricity, 2030.

To that end our government is committed to running our traditional coal and natural gas plants to the end of their respective lifetimes, while an alternative such as small modular reactors . . . until that time that they can be successfully developed and deployed, if that is what is chosen.

If an increasing carbon tax combined with a second carbon tax, known as the clean fuel standard, and the proposed clean electricity regulations aren't enough, we're now learning that the madness in Ottawa isn't stopping there. Now the coalition of Trudeau and Singh are prepared to implement an oil and gas emissions cap on producers. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've seen this movie before and it doesn't end well for anyone.

The federal Liberals and NDP widened the carbon tax goalposts with per-tonne charges that were initially capped, but then

uncapped and increased, and then increased again and again. It started at \$20 a tonne and Canadians were promised it wouldn't go above \$50. As of now it's \$65, and by the end of 2030 it's scheduled to hit \$170. And there's no telling how high it will go after that.

I'd say it's funny how the Liberals' carbon tax increases work, but honestly it's no laughing matter, and we all face inflation and high interest rates. And economists have pointed to the carbon tax as a prominent driver of that inflation that we are seeing in everything we buy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Christmas is just under a month away. People need to remember that while there may be no carbon tax showing up on that receipt at the store, they need to remember it's been paid multiple times in the supply chain and it's built into the prices.

The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour, and there's no reason to believe that any Liberal-NDP oil and gas emissions cap won't be the first dagger in their quest to totally eliminate exploration and production of oil and gas in our province or any other place in our country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the motion says, all of these current and proposed pieces of legislation and policy are simply unconstitutional, uneconomical, and a clear violation of provincial rights under sections 92 and 92A of the Constitution. It's our job as a provincial government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to ensure that the people of Saskatchewan are protected from overreach into provincial items of jurisdiction.

While sections 92 and 92A protect the province's authority over exploration, production, and export of non-renewable natural resources and other things, the federal Liberal-NDP government has made it clear to all Canadians that they'll put their flawed ideology and impossible deadlines ahead of guaranteeing a secure source of power and heat.

In other words, the federal government doesn't care how much money net zero electrical generation by 2035 will cost or the toll it will take on society. We know this based on their lack of fiscal policy and their unwillingness to be pragmatic to the realities of what can and should be done. The feds continue to insist the provinces should be subservient, that the universal top-down approach is the only way, no matter the economic suffering it will cause to the people and industries across our great nation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we think that approach taken by the federal coalition in Ottawa is completely irresponsible and weakens Confederation as a whole. It's been said before by several of my colleagues, but it's worth repeating again: a strong Saskatchewan means a strong Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is why our government responded to the federal overreach by passing *The Saskatchewan First Act* in March of this year. It's also worth noting as well that at least a couple of the members opposite saw the light, albeit temporarily, with the need for Saskatchewan to assert its constitutional rights over power production. Comments like this one from December 3rd of last year from the member from Regina Douglas Park:

The Saskatchewan NDP absolutely believes we should be

standing up for Saskatchewan at the federal level. We need to be ensuring that we're getting the best deal for this province.

And then there's this one from the member from Regina University, who I can hear talking over there, just a couple months later on February 1st: "Ottawa needs to stop unilaterally implementing policies without working with the province, communities, and workers."

But as we've seen before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP weren't satisfied with motoring down the road on the same road as the government on four perfectly inflated tires. Inexplicably but not surprisingly, that opposition punctured the front tires and loosened the lug nuts on the rear ones and voted against *The Saskatchewan First Act*. So much for the members opposite wanting to stand up for Saskatchewan people or making our province's best interests our first and foremost.

Apparently standing up to federal overreach into provincial jurisdiction took a back seat to the demands from their federal leader to toe the party line. Now the opposition may put on a brave face from time to time as they say they stand with the people of our province, but Jagmeet Singh won't even answer the opposition's phone calls. In fact I wouldn't be surprised if their emails to Jagmeet and Justin go straight to junk mail either.

Which brings us to where we are today, Mr. Speaker. Just this week the tribunal that forms part of *The Saskatchewan First Act* was announced by the Minister of Justice, and we were graced by the presence of some of these very knowledgeable individuals who are so highly respected in their fields of work. And we know that they're going to do great work on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

The Act is needed more than ever, and you need to look no further into the recent events to see that the tide is turning. The court struck down the federal government's labelling of all plastics as toxic in order to mandate the elimination of all single-use plastics. We've seen C-69 struck down at the Supreme Court. This is why *The Saskatchewan First Act* was created, passed, and put into force on September 15th of this year.

It's taken 90 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to build our power grid in this province. It's a power grid that every individual, every business, and every hospital, school, and daycare home, personal care homes, long-term care homes rely on for heating and cooling, lights, and power for sustenance and the generation of wealth.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank goodness for *The Saskatchewan First Act* and the tribunal doing the work on behalf of the people of this province. Our predecessors possessed the strength, the wisdom, and the know-how to build our province's reliable and cost-effective electrical utility.

Today our government possesses the vision, the courage, and the determination to ensure that our power grid, this essential piece of critical infrastructure, not to mention our economy and our personal well-being of every individual in this great province, is protected for the people that rely on it every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now I'm relatively new here, in my third month now as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], so you'll have to forgive me for my confusion as to why we're debating virtually the same motion as we did two weeks ago. Here we are again debating the Sask Party government's motion that pats themselves on the back.

Two weeks ago I reminded members opposite about the motion that we put forward in the Assembly that called on the federal government to extend the carbon tax carve-out to home heating oil, or that the federal government had extended to home heating oil, that we extended to all home heating across the country. We all voted in favour of that motion.

And I'll repeat what I said two weeks ago. Members on this side don't support the federal carbon tax. We support pipelines. We support our agriculture sector. We support our oil and gas workers. We support Saskatchewan people and we certainly, certainly support the Saskatchewan economy.

You know what this says to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact that we're debating basically the same motion? This government isn't listening. We often refer to this government as tired and out of touch, and they get all fired up when we say it. But here they are again, demonstrating about how tired they really are.

[11:45]

We're talking again about the clean electricity regulations, oil and gas cap, federal fuel standards, which are the exact same things that we talked about two weeks ago when we debated the last 75-minute debate topic that this government put forward.

It's clear, though, that it's not just us this tired and out-of-touch government is not listening to. There are a lot of other people in this province who this government isn't listening to. They're not listening to teachers who have been calling for this government's help for years to fix the crisis in our classrooms. With 95 per cent of teachers in favour of job action, Mr. Deputy Speaker, teachers are clearly fed up. This government's not listening to school boards who have been telling them the same thing, that there is a crisis in education. And they're not listening to parents, who again are saying the same thing about the lack of supports for their kids.

They're not listening to nurses who have been protesting in front of this building and in front of St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon this week. They're not listening to doctors as ERs [emergency room] overflow and hallway medicine keeps getting worse and worse. They're not listening to paramedics. They're not listening to paramedics, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who are telling us that they're hanging on by a thread, who need support and solutions. And they're not listening to patients, the people of this province who can't get the care they need when they need it.

They're not listening to regular people who are telling them that they're struggling to make ends meet as inflation drives up the prices of food and fuel, as food bank use increases across the province, as homelessness increases across the province.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're not listening to the 2,200 people who sent letters to the Premier asking for a wetland conservation policy. Maybe, maybe we're not talking about an agricultural drainage policy. We want a wetland policy. Okay, okay. I'll get back to the motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because apparently members opposite aren't listening to me today.

This is a good step. I'm proud of them today. I'm proud of them. Now I hope they'll listen to this part because this is important. Climate change is real. Now it is caused by the burning of fossil fuels that release carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Now Saskatchewan people want this government to act on climate change. Saskatchewan companies want this government to act on climate change. Otherwise why would those companies be going to COP28 with them?

So here is the thing. If this government doesn't like the clean electricity regulations, if they don't like the oil and gas cap, if they don't like the federal fuel standard — as I asked two weeks ago — what is their plan? What do they actually propose to reduce emissions? Now certainly the feds should stay in their own lanes, but there has to be some kind of alternative from this government. Ah, perhaps they're just too tired, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now I figured someone on that side would yell "the Prairie Resilience" because that's what they yelled at me last week. Prairie Resilience is their plan. But when it comes to Prairie Resilience, you know, I believe there are some amazing Ministry of Environment staff who helped put this document together, who do actually believe that this government or that we need a plan in Saskatchewan to reduce emissions. But they had a government that's, you know, dictating how things are going to go, and so there's only so much that those staff members can actually do.

But *Prairie Resilience* is a document with some very vague language and statements and some very generously ambiguous self-reporting rates, which isn't a surprise because we know how much this government loves transparency.

An Hon. Member: — Did you read the report?

Mr. Clarke: — Yes, I did last night, Minister. And we're going to talk about the report because I read it. Now, Minister, I have a science background. I certainly understand it. We know you don't care about climate change, Minister.

Well, so 20 out of the 22 of the measurements, this government has rated themselves as good, the highest category. Wow, that's from a Premier, that's from a government with a Premier who says he doesn't care about emissions. This government has self-assessed themselves as doing a great job in Prairie Resilience. That's weird, because every time that we bring up climate change in the Assembly here, members opposite groan and laugh. So something's not adding up, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now let's dive deeper in to Prairie Resilience, shall we? Measure 1. Measure 1 is the total area of agricultural land under permanent cover in Saskatchewan. This measure is given a fair rating, even though permanent cover has decreased in this province. Now we know that native prairie continues to be broken and plowed under each year, and the fair rating is

generous at best. How is this not a poor rating?

The Deputy Speaker: — Just a minute. I would ask the member . . . We're not talking about Prairie Resilience. We're talking about the motion that's out here right now.

Mr. Clarke: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're talking about caps and efforts to reduce emissions in Saskatchewan. I'm talking about the government's plan, Prairie Resilience, on how they're talking about reducing emissions in Saskatchewan. I think it's very pertinent. All right. Here we go. Okay, thank you.

How about measure 8? Total greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity sector — which is directly related to the motion — what measures do you think this one has gotten? The government has given themselves a good rating. But I'm going to read from *Prairie Resilience* here for a second because it is directly related. The government's target is by 2030 reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Saskatchewan's electricity sector to 7.1 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, which is a 50 per cent reduction from 2005 levels.

Now the status in 2021, which is the most up-to-date numbers in the *Prairie Resilience* report, says that emissions on a sector-wide basis increased to 14.9 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, which was 5.1 per cent higher than in 2005, the 13-year baseline. This was an increase of 2.2 megatonnes of carbon dioxide from the previous year.

So emissions have increased in the last year. They haven't reduced emissions past 2005, and we have to reduce it by another 50 per cent to meet their 2030 goals. But the *Prairie Resilience* says they're doing a good job, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now I'm going to wrap up here because my time has gone way too quickly. I am excited . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thanks. Thanks, Member. I'm excited about the future of this province because there is so much opportunity ahead of us, and we have the people to make that happen. And I continue to be impressed in so many ways by the innovation and spirit of Saskatchewan people.

Saskatchewan New Democrats are committed to working with all people in this province, because this province has what the world needs. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Kaeding: — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thanks for allowing me the opportunity to once again weigh in and to support the response that our government has to the indiscriminate federal Liberal-NDP coalition incursion into matters that should be under provincial jurisdiction.

So you know, just hearing from the opposition members here today, why are we debating this again? Here's why. Because we continue to hear contradictions from virtually every member, every member of the opposition. Maybe it's tweets and interviews supporting the carbon tax. Maybe it's tweets and interviews slagging our oil and gas industry. Tweets and interviews that they're really declaring our economy here in the province a dumpster fire. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's why we are

debating this topic once again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, last week I identified to this Assembly the swings and misses that this federal government has had recently regarding their move into provincial matters. So let's recap where the game highlights have gone up to this point in the discussion.

I don't believe we can really single out one federal Act that is really more egregious than any one other of the many Acts that the federal government has inflicted on parts of Confederation, certainly this part of Confederation. And that's as they continue to be admonished by their decisions by the federal courts.

In the court of personal opinion, our federal government absolutely went down swinging. Their most recent regional carve-out of the carbon tax on heating fuel in Atlantic Canada didn't even resonate well in Atlantic Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where unfortunately the federal government is hemorrhaging a lot of votes and support.

You know, for years the Liberal government told us that the carbon tax on heating oil did not make life unaffordable. But now they've paused their tax on heating oil to make more life affordable. That was written by the New Brunswick premier, Blaine Higgs, on social media.

I think the economic harm with the federal carbon tax is now quite obvious. Even the federal Liberal enablers, the NDP, are stating, and I quote, "The Liberals seem to be hand-picking who they help based on their own political interests, leaving families in northern Ontario, Alberta, and other parts of the country behind." That was what the NDP party said in their article found in *The Globe and Mail* on October 26th.

The federal government was thrown out another knuckle-curve ball when just two weeks ago the Federal Court made a ruling, and that was that their classification of all plastic manufactured items . . . they classified them as toxic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which really was equivalent to comparing them, plastic items, to known dangerous carcinogenic compounds as asbestos, mercury, and arsenic. The court's ruling was that the federal government has exercised far too "overly broad" and overreach in a provincial jurisdiction.

We were joined in the plastic case by Alberta and a number of manufacturers who argued that Canada once again failed to demonstrate that it had enough scientific evidence to justify the regulations. This Liberal-NDP coalition government's overzealous pursuit of virtue-signalling and punitive policies in the name of climate change is costing our economy and our businesses and our average Canadians. And it's costing them plenty, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And the federal government went down swinging when Saskatchewan and seven other provinces were supported by the federal courts in a 5-2 decision that Bill C-69, the *Impact Assessment Act*, or the no-more-pipelines bill, or what was also known as the don't-build-anything-anywhere-anytime Act, was unconstitutional.

The IAA [*Impact Assessment Act*] was built to obstruct. It expanded the matters to be assessed, including effects on gender and climate change. Projects that fell under provincial

jurisdictions such as oil sands projects and interprovincial pipelines were caught up in its web, and many were not going to see the light of day. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the federal government was going to be pitching a shutout and really not with a positive outcome.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, next up to the federal plate is the clean electricity regulations. And our government has been advocating for years to attempt to convince the federal government that emissions reduction was a goal of ours as well, however it needed to be done in a practical and a sustained way. And I've been on record before quoting studies done by various institutions who have indicated that the cost for our province to reach a 30 per cent emissions reduction by 2035 could cost this province and industry over \$40 billion, and that may include attempting to use technology that may not even exist or even moved off the proof-of-concept table yet.

Our government continues to inform Ottawa that their targets to have net zero emissions by 2035 will cost this province billions of dollars and cause electricity rates to spike. More than spike, possibly double. That is not how we build an economy. This potential harm is not limited to the production of electricity or the utility itself. That harm also extends to industrial and commercial users of the grid and financially vulnerable people who will be faced with rising costs of power and goods that require power.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need emissions reductions without wealth destruction. Minister Duncan shared a letter he wrote in early November to federal Environment minister Steven Guilbeault urging him not to proceed with the regulations as proposed. He quoted, "Aside from the plan that we've already put forward, 2035 significantly constrains our ability to actually deliver on our plan of 2050," Minister Duncan said. And he added, "We're not disagreeing with net zero. It's really just the timelines."

Ottawa's standards would require all electricity be from renewable sources such as wind and hydro or to be equipped with carbon capture technology by 2035. Now both Alberta and our government have said that the timeline is not doable, and they're instead targeting 2050 as a date for full emissions-free electricity. Again we're not getting any signs from the federal government's players' bench that they're here to support or even include members of the Confederation in decisions that have really far-reaching economic and rights-bearing obligations.

[12:00]

Last week I discussed another federal issue that is better served by this province, where we've moved from the federal firearms responsibility to the Saskatchewan firearms office. In this office, under the leadership of Robert Freberg, it is supporting, exactly supporting that safe communities . . . managing the ownership, purchase, movement, and use of firearms in this province with the administration of federal firearms legislation. That's done by a provincial jurisdiction, by a provincial office here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government in March of this year passed *The Saskatchewan First Act*. It's a very important Act which really is designed to defend our province's economic

autonomy and potential from federal overreach. *The Saskatchewan First Act* amends the constitution of Saskatchewan to clearly confirm our autonomy and assert our exclusive legislative jurisdiction under section 92 of the Constitution of Canada over a number of areas that include, for one, the exploration for non-renewable natural resources; number two, the development, conservation, and management of non-renewable, natural, and forestry resources; and number three, the operation of sites and facilities for the generation and production of electrical energy.

In the Act that was passed in March it stated that we will also create an independent Economic Impact Assessment Tribunal. Now this tribunal will define, quantify, and report on the economic effects of federal initiatives on provincial investments and Saskatchewan projects, businesses, and people.

Yesterday the Minister of Justice and Attorney General formally introduced the panel and also formally introduced that we will be referring the federal clean electricity regulations for first consideration to the tribunal. The tribunal will analyze the costs of these ill-thought-out policies, regulations, or really whatever we call them, and present them to government. We'll then decide as government how we would like to proceed. Always the strong possibility that we will submit the findings as evidence and legal action in defence of and to protect Saskatchewan autonomy, constitutional rights, and future economic prosperity.

These are strange times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because at least Murray Mandryk got the headline partially right this morning, and I quote, "Eyre's blue-ribbon Sask first panel [although] imperfect, but [is] needed." Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe we can predict how the clean electricity regs will affect our province since they currently dictate that there'll be no fossil fuel-generated power by 2035. Our federal Minister of Environment very casually asked, why not make sure that this build-out is clean and affordable? We agree but I don't think \$40 billion in the next 10 years is affordable. And that is the playbook for the federal government. They haven't costed any of this out.

Contrary to what they suggest, Manitoba doesn't even have enough hydro to export to us. Saskatchewan doesn't have capacity to increase hydro development. Renewables aren't going to provide dependable baseload power and will require significant build-outs to increase our overall supply in the province, and definitely cannot safely bridge the gap from coal to potentially nuclear power by 2035.

You know, I know what this government is going to do. We are going to continue to reaffirm Saskatchewan's exclusive provincial jurisdiction as enshrined in the constitution over electrical power generation and any other policy regulation that this federal government wants to attempt and wade into. We'll continue to build and protect.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Saskatchewan first, another week, another 75-minute debate, another opportunity to revisit what appears to be the sole focus of this tired and out-of-touch government, or perhaps the sole focus of at least a member or two who need a little air in their

tires. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as has been well canvassed, we have been clear on the issues listed here — clean electricity regs, oil and gas cap, federal fuel standards — didn't even talk about the carbon tax but let's be clear on that one too, Mr. Speaker.

We can canvas this every week if that's the interest of members opposite. Talking about things that we agree on is a refreshing change. But, Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government needs to give . . . Pardon me, Mr. Speaker. This tired and out-of-touch federal government needs to give their heads a shake when it comes to their clean electricity regulations. We've been clear about that. And they need to recognize what the realities of their proposal for what net zero will mean for our electrical system.

The federal government, as we've said, needs to immediately offset the cost of any low-emission or new renewable power generation in Saskatchewan. We've canvassed this. We can do it every week.

Canadian energy production is amongst the best in the world. And the federal fuel standard is not the way to encourage innovation when it comes to biofuels. There's certainly a market for that innovation, Mr. Speaker. The proposed investment by leaders of Saskatchewan industry, like AGT and FCL [Federated Co-operatives Ltd.], make this clear. And we believe there's a way to incentivize this and encourage this without federal overreach into provincial jurisdictions. It's not complicated. We need solutions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not just the fight.

And this is the government that has proposed Sask-first as the solution. So let's look at *The Saskatchewan First Act* in question, whether or not it's an effective piece of legislation. And here I'll be quoting from the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood, who talked about, and I quote, "a virtue-signalling crusade."

So is Sask-first a virtue-signalling crusade or is it an effective piece of legislation? Is it something that gives fire and fury to the fight and false hope in the place of real solutions and prosperity?

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's look at what Sask-first does. And perhaps there is no better person to quote from than the Minister of Justice, one year ago today, November 30th, 2022 in the *Leader-Post*, our Minister of Justice confidently debating Howard Leeson. And she said, and I quote:

Contrary to Leeson's assertion, we are not adding new powers to the legislature of Saskatchewan. In section 3 we are merely asserting and enumerating the province's exclusive powers.

A piece of legislation that simply reasserts what already exists. What leadership. What action. And is it any surprise when *The Saskatchewan First Act* emerged as the love child of Lyle Stewart's closed-door summer succession tour and the *Drawing the Line* economic manifesto widely reviewed by Alberta economist Trevor Tombe as "insane and completely unbelievable" — that was a quote — and immortalized, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by conservative thought leader Howard Anglin? I'll quote again:

Drawing the Line is a new low in political communications in Canada. It is doubtful that any government in the history of Confederation — federal, provincial, or municipal — has published something so badly written. My first thought was

that an early and unedited draft had been posted prematurely, but after almost a week it has not been replaced. The text is not so much spoiled by errors as composed of them, and the run-on sentences meander more than the South Saskatchewan River.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have to ask ourselves, is this the priority of this government? Are they truly putting Saskatchewan first? Saskatchewan minimum wage, not first. Intimate partner violence far outstripping the rest of the country. Student achievement. Crime. Economic confidence. Surgical wait times. Child poverty. Mammograms, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 16 years and a 16-hour drive.

A former premier advising convoy protesters, and the member from Kelvington-Wadena whinging about how, and I'll quote, his government has "numerous challenges with the feds. Appreciate all you're doing. Great well-articulated message." The article continues, and I'll quote, "Nerlien responds by saying that Moe is fighting back every day but not getting much recognition for it."

Hate crimes in Saskatchewan quadrupling. Hospital beds per capita. Affordable, reliable power. Sustainable power. Second-worst economic record. Rental vacancies. Mortgage foreclosures. Abysmal jobs record. Provincial debt over \$30 billion and a budget that's off by 1.3 billion smackerels. That is magnitudes worse than the dumpster fire that was the 2017 budget.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm not going to have time to go through the entire list of how this government is not putting Saskatchewan first, but isn't the contrast stark? Because if this was a government, Mr. Speaker, that was actually serious, and was serious about their economic tribunal, it is passing strange that a government so focused on the economic record of the 1990s would appoint Premier Romanow's fiscal hawk as their financial guru.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the Assembly we have a lot of respect for our predecessors and the work of Mr. Romanow's government, the legacy that Mr. Romanow and his government have had on this country. But it's strange. Is it a good record or a bad record? Was Roy Romanow's Finance minister a great Finance minister, tasked with championing Saskatchewan's economic future through the economic assessment tribunal, or no? Perhaps, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government's hyper-fixation on the 1990s is one of admiration.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if Saskatchewan-first was truly the priority of this government, perhaps we would have seen a special sitting dedicated to Saskatchewan's economic future instead of an Assembly and all the resources and might of this government focused on stripping the Charter rights of vulnerable children.

We see a government focused on vanity projects, on ideology and waste, not focused on putting Saskatchewan first. They're not focused on dealing with the crippling cost of living. They're not focused on dealing with mental health, addictions, our crumbling main streets, Mr. Speaker, 8,000 small businesses looking at closing their doors, Mr. Speaker.

The member from Martensville-Warman, he said in his remarks, and I'll quote again:

You know things are getting bad and they're only getting worse, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when one looks at the country's credit card. It's been used so much that the numbers are worn right off, the magnetic strip is gone, and the microchip is begging for mercy. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gets worse. The printing press is almost out of ink and the mill is quickly running out of paper.

He went on:

And while the printing press is drying up, they are now reaching into wallets and purses of Canadians, not with one hand but with both, to pay for their patently unachievable schemes.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was the member talking about Chrystia Freeland, or was he talking about his own Deputy Premier?

Because, Mr. Speaker, today the Premier spoke of the importance of coming together, of unity, and we agree. Week after week we've offered our support standing against federal intrusion, and we do not have the intent of rolling over for Ottawa, as the members opposite did on equalization, who said to premier Harper, "tickle my tummy," Mr. Speaker.

What we are intent on doing is bringing together this country, not tearing it down, Mr. Speaker, on building up this province in an age of terror, uncertainty, and war. That is what leaders do. They do not rip and rend at patriotism. They build this province and our beautiful Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: — The 65-minute period has expired. The 10-minute question-and-answer period will begin. I recognize . . . Sorry. No, the answer period will begin, and I recognize the member from Walsh Acres.

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Could the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood clarify the meaning of government advocacy work, as mentioned in the motion? By advocacy, do they mean complaining about the federal government on Twitter or ignoring First Nations until they filed a lawsuit?

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

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Government advocacy on this side means standing up for our industry, standing up for our agricultural producers, standing up for our miners, for our energy workers, standing up for them and selling what we make in Saskatchewan to the world. And our Premier's going to be standing up in Dubai doing just that. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The members opposite have claimed to oppose *The Saskatchewan*

First Act and they continue to support their federal leaders in propping up the Trudeau Liberals. However I remember when we passed second reading of this bill unanimously, and yet they have claimed *The Saskatchewan First Act* is a waste of time and does nothing to help Saskatchewan people.

To the member from Regina Walsh Acres: will you support the rulings and findings made by the Saskatchewan economic impact tribunal?

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, as someone who's new to this position, I wasn't here for the vote when the Sask first Act passed, so I don't have any experience being in the House during that time. But I want to thank members opposite for passing our motion to call on the federal government to carve out the carbon tax on home heating for all Canadians. That was unanimous.

[12:15]

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I'd like put this question to the member from Martensville-Warman. I read some of his remarks back into the record, and he said, "while the printing press is drying up, they are now reaching into wallets and purses of Canadians, not with one hand but with both, to pay for their patently unachievable schemes."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member from Martensville-Warman, when he's talking about running up the debt and not being in touch with the needs of everyday people, was he talking about Chrystia Freeland, or was he talking about Saskatchewan's Minister of Finance?

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

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I've got two words for the answer for the member opposite: Chrystia Freeland. Absolutely. Both hands, along with Jagmeet and along with Justin and along with Guilbeault. They are all going after Canadians' money more than ever before.

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

Mr. B. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Pleased to be able to stand and ask today. So the member from Cumberland, unfortunately not here to hear this today . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — You can't say when a member's not here.

Mr. B. McLeod: — . . . opposing the tribunal and *The Saskatchewan First Act*, I quote: "So hopefully the backbenchers with the Sask Party government, you can actually wake up some of those ministers and say, hey, we didn't do this right."

On our side of the House, we stand with our ministers who are standing up to federal regulations that would see Saskatchewan people's energy bills become completely unaffordable at best.

To the member opposite from Walsh Acres, will you commit to waking up some of your colleagues and supporting our government in opposing the federal clean electricity regulation?

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thanks to the member opposite for the question. You know, we've been clear about being worried about the impact of the clean energy regulations on the Saskatchewan economy. We are happy to work with Saskatchewan companies to invest in renewable energy, to transition our grid to rely less on fossil fuels. And so yeah, we're happy to work with any organization, any business who wants to support the Saskatchewan economy.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to pose my question to the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood. I want to ask if he remembers all the times we have debated clean energy regulations, carbon tax in this Assembly. And if so, in the face of so many issues facing Saskatchewan people — cost of living, health care, education — why did he think this was an appropriate debate topic to pose for this Assembly again?

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

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I thank the member opposite for the question. These debates are absolutely critical for everyone in this province because energy touches every facet of our lives, touches every facet of our industries, and touches every facet of everything we produce in this province and sell to the rest of the world. So these debates are critical, and we will never stop debating the issues that are relevant to Saskatchewan people. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Last year the member from Saskatoon Centre also threw in their lot with Jagmeet Singh and Justin Trudeau. They said, and I quote, “. . . I guess what I also want to say is that this bill actually does nothing to help Saskatchewan people.” That was *Hansard*, November 23rd, 2022.

To the member from Saskatoon Meewasin: do you agree with your colleague that after seeing our tribunal appointments and the clean electricity regulations submitted to them, standing up to federal overreach and ensuring Saskatchewan people can heat their homes without breaking the bank does nothing to help people?

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

Mr. Teed: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm a little bit confused about the question because I'm wondering if he's quoting the member from Saskatoon Centre or his very own Justice minister, who said the exact same thing in the news.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood: there's been a lot of talk about energy and power generation in this Assembly. So I'm wondering if he can share, has his government made the decision to proceed with small modular reactors and nuclear power as part of Saskatchewan's energy future?

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

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank the member opposite for the question. This government is focused on educating ourselves and making decisions for the benefit of the whole province. We haven't made a hard decision yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it is definitely on our radar. We are very aware of what's going on in Ontario. We're following what's happening there and we're looking forward to seeing their project complete, on time and under budget. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. While the opposition continues to claim that they have always been opposed to the carbon tax and the federal government's infringement on our rights of Saskatchewan people, we see them consistently talking down the efforts to protect the resource rights in our province and keep the cost of living low to residents. To the member from Regina Walsh Acres: do you agree with the government that the federal clean electricity regulations are unconstitutional and unsustainable for Saskatchewan people?

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you. I'm no constitutional law expert, Mr. Speaker, so I'm not sure what the opinion is on that. But you know, it's interesting to hear the members opposite saying that we're wondering why they're going to Dubai and spending \$756 million on a pavilion to be in the Green Zone with the child activists. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Another great question about Saskatchewan's power future and generation. To the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood: is he aware of the current state of the hundreds of millions of dollars that are sitting maybe in abeyance with the federal government as a result of the outputs-based performance system? Has this government in fact executed an agreement with the federal government to ensure that those dollars are returned to Saskatchewan taxpayers?

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

Mr. Keisig: — Thank the member opposite for the question. These negotiations are ongoing. We will always support industry. We will support SaskPower and all of the good work they're doing. And we will never, never back down on the reliability of our electrical grid that each and every Saskatchewan person relies on. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 2 — Suspension of Provincial Fuel Tax

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

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

Mr. Love: — That's me, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Lots of confusion over the last few weeks. I think we've had about half a dozen people in the Assembly referred to as the member from Saskatoon Eastview, but I'm the only one.

I am actually quite pleased to be on my feet to speak to this motion brought forward by my colleague, seatmate, and good friend, the member from Regina Rosemont. I think it's important, and so I'll put some comments on the record today about this motion and why it's needed.

First of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's answer the question. Why is this needed? Why is this important? We know from polling over the last year or so — even this week, Angus Reid polling — where Saskatchewan people have identified the cost-of-living struggles with affordability as the top concern. We see that in other provinces, but actually in Saskatchewan we see I think an equal number of concerned people in our province as Alberta, and quite a lot more than a number of other provinces. So we certainly know that from a number of different polling agencies, how many folks are really concerned about this.

But we don't just need to rely on polling. Of course all of us elected in here, we hear from our constituents all the time. Could we have had an emergency session in this Chamber on the number one issue in our province, the affordability, cost-of-living crisis? Absolutely. That would have been a very good reason to call the members back to spend taxpayer dollars to talk about the crushing cost of living and why it's particularly bad in Saskatchewan. But that's not the priority of this government. In fact they've done next to nothing to address the number one concern for Saskatchewan people.

And as elected folks, we do hear from our constituents all the time in grocery stores where the cost of food continues to climb, more so in Saskatchewan than any other province. We do hear from our constituents in hockey rinks, as we're out for a walk,

maybe with our families in parks in our neighbourhoods and communities. We do hear from constituents when they stop by our office, and we know that that's a concern.

And we absolutely know from those summer by-elections that the cost of living was the number one issue. And when voters were asked, who do they trust to respond to this crisis, they chose the two new members for Regina Walsh Acres and Regina Coronation Park as we heard from voters on the doorstep day after day about how important this issue is to them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the need for relief is very real. Now this government has made claims in the budget, this year's budget and since then, that Saskatchewan is the most affordable province in the country. But others have refuted those claims. I'd like to point to a news article from March 24, 2023 entitled — this is from CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] — entitled "Why Saskatchewan's claim that province is 'most affordable' in Canada doesn't add up." I suggest the government MLAs on this side read this piece, because I think it gives a very different perspective than the partisan talking lines that we hear day after day from the Minister of Finance and other members opposite.

I'll be very, very brief here, but certainly the folks commenting, the experts commenting on this in this piece from last March, have noted that the type of families that this government is referring to are "pseudo-families." The quote continues, "It's not capturing what actual people might be living."

So using hypotheticals, but doesn't meet the realities that Saskatchewan families see day after day. So what do families see in this province? What do they say? Well we know that 59 per cent of Saskatchewan people said they are financially worse off than a year ago. Fifty-nine per cent, worse off than they were a year ago. Forty-eight per cent of Saskatchewan people said that they expect to be worse off financially next year than this year. So this situation is not getting better. And 55 per cent of Saskatchewan people said that they have a tough or very difficult time paying their rent or mortgage.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about a government that's out of touch, this is exactly what we're talking about. A government that pats themselves on the back while the majority of Saskatchewan people look at their financial outlooks and say, I am worse off this year compared to last year, and I expect to be in the same position a year from now, worse off than I am today.

That is a government that is out of touch with the realities that Saskatchewan people face. And when this government is asked about this, what have been some of their responses? What have been some of their responses? They want a bigger house, you know, that they want to afford another trailer, you know. How out of touch can you get when people are struggling to put food on the table and they're worried about buying a bigger house?

That same Finance minister took an \$8,000 private jet trip to go for lunch in North Battleford. I mean, it's astounding. When we say out of touch, that's what we're talking about, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So to wrap up here, I'd like to point to why this motion brought forward by my colleague from Regina Rosemont is significant. The motion says:

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've seen other provinces take this step. In the past, Alberta took this step when some of the pressures we're seeing now were newer than they are today. I don't know the exact date when they imposed this, but certainly the Government of Alberta took a step to give people relief at the pumps, and it made a significant difference. We see the Government of Manitoba taking that step recently, removing the fuel tax for a period of time to give people a break at the pumps.

[12:30]

I think that this is not by any means the only solution that we've proposed or that could address the crushing cost-of-living crisis that we're in, but it certainly is a good one. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's a sensible solution. I think it rises to the challenges of the day. And the challenges of the day are that families in Saskatchewan are struggling to pay their rents, pay their mortgages, put food on the table, and to provide for the basics.

And what has been the response of this government? Have they risen to the challenge of the day? Absolutely not. They've been piling on — 32 new taxes and fees in one budget alone. When cost of living is going up, they're making the situation worse for families in Saskatchewan. Thirty-two new taxes and fees piling on for families struggling to pay their bills.

So finally . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And I am wrapping up. Thank you to the Deputy House Leader. She's correct. I can hear.

I think it's a sensible approach. I think it's the right approach. I think that this government would be wise to support this motion brought forward by my colleague from Rosemont. But at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will move that we adjourn debate on the motion. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved that this Assembly 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 Monday at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:32.]

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