



FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

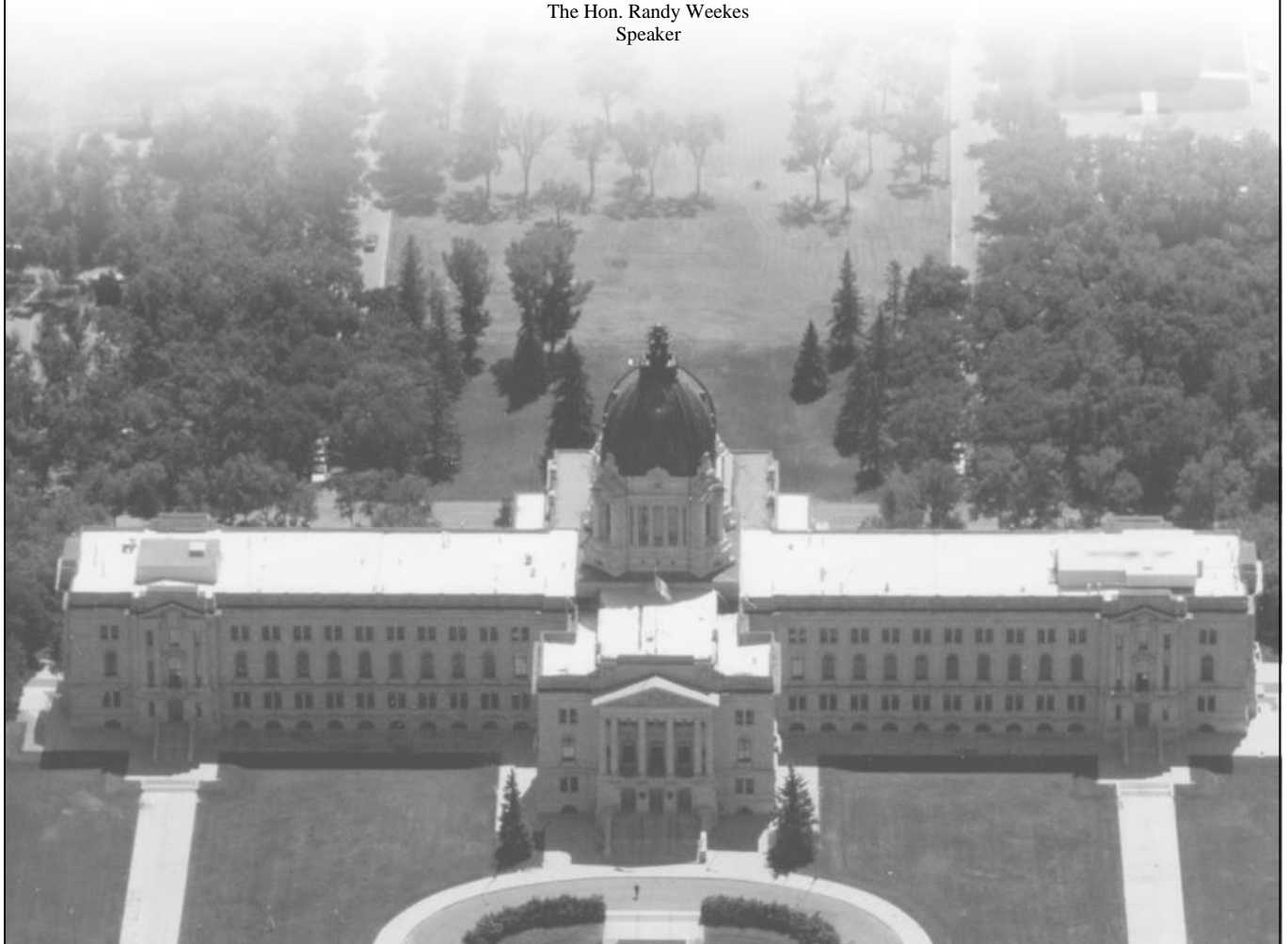
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
4th Session — 29th Legislature

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

Speaker — Hon. Randy Weekes

Premier — Hon. Scott Moe

Leader of the Opposition — Carla Beck

Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)

Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)

Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)

Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

Burki, Noor — Regina Coronation Park (NDP)

Carr, Hon. Lori — Estevan (SP)

Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)

Clarke, Jared — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP)

Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP)

Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)

Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

Domotor, Ryan — Cut Knife-Turtleford (Ind.)

Duncan, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)

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

Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)

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Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP)

Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP)

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

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

Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)

Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)

Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)

Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)

Kaeding, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)

Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)

Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (Ind.)

Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP)

Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)

Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

McLeod, Blaine — Lumsden-Morse (SP)

McLeod, Hon. Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)

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

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

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

Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)

Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)

Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)

Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP)

Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)

Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)

Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

Skoropad, Dana — Arm River (SP)

Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)

Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)

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

Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)

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

Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 44; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 14;
Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1; Independent — 2

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Iris Lang

Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel — Kenneth S. Ring, K.C.

Deputy Clerk — Kathy Burianyk

Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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Legislative Assembly are available
within hours after each sitting.

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

The Speaker: — I would just like to welcome all our guests here today. Great to see so many people out to their Legislative Assembly, but I'd like to caution you that you're not to take part in any of the proceedings and that means no clapping, no heckling, no talking, and certainly no photos or video recordings. Thank you.

Why is the member on his feet? Member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Domotor: — I ask leave to make a personal statement.

The Speaker: — The member has asked leave to make a personal statement. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Apology

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you. At the time of my incident last fall, I was struggling emotionally with things that were happening in my personal life and my marriage. This affected my mental health and my lapse in judgment which resulted in me making a decision I will regret for the rest of my life. This is not a reflection of the government or myself as an individual, but a reflection of what was happening in my personal life at that time.

Again I regret what I tried to do, and I apologize to my family, my constituency assistant, the constituents of Cut Knife-Turtleford, the Premier, and all the members of this Assembly as well as any government officials that may have been affected by my actions.

I've heard the Premier say on several occasions, we can't do this without the love and support of our family, and I believe that is so very, very true. I think we all have to remember that as members, elected officials, that we are just like regular people and sometimes we make mistakes just like private individuals do in their lives. Some are major, some are minor, but we probably all know somebody who's either said something or done something that they truly wish they could redo or take back.

I can't change what I tried to do that day, but it is something that I am truly sorry for and will regret for the rest of my days. I apologize again to everyone in this Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you

indicated, to you and through you, I'd like to welcome many guests that have joined us here in the galleries today — educators from the city of Regina and surrounding communities. Thank you for joining us today and making your voice heard outside the legislature today. We appreciate the work that you do on a daily basis with our children and grandchildren and nieces and nephews every single day. So again, to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I welcome all these guests to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Ms. Beck: — 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.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to join with the minister in welcoming the educators, the teachers that we have with us here today seated in your gallery, in the west gallery, and in the east gallery. We have teachers here today from Regina Public, Regina Catholic, Prairie South, from Holy Family, from the South East Cornerstone, and also teachers here from the Conseil des écoles fransaskoises and the SDLCL [Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre].

Mr. Speaker, these teachers have in many cases, braved bad roads to be here with us today. They've certainly braved a number of hours out in the biting cold. But they believed, as we believe, it's very important that they be here today.

And they were joined outside by thousands, and even more on the phones today making phone calls and emailing, wanting those in this Legislative Assembly to understand why they're out on the picket line and not in the classrooms doing what they love and, frankly, what we need as a province for them to be doing with our kids and our grandkids and our neighbours' kids, Mr. Speaker.

It is my privilege to introduce you, and it's been wonderful to talk with many of you out in front of the legislature and on the line today and in previous days of action, but I also am very sorry that you had to be here because I know you don't take this action lightly. And I know there isn't one of you who wouldn't rather be in their classroom ensuring that they're doing all they can, all you can, for your students. And I know that the members of our team who joined you today and in previous days of action have very much enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you about the reasons that you're out on the picket line.

And I want to remark that it was great to see that the morale and the drive is as strong as it was on that very first day when we joined you up in Saskatoon, in Davidson, and here in Regina. And we know why you're here: a decade of declining supports in our classrooms, increased need, increased enrolment, and fewer and fewer supports. We know that the impact of this decade, we note that that impact has been great for you, for your members, for your colleagues, and for the kids, the students that you serve.

And it's difficult year after year to do more and more with less and less.

And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, many of the conversations that we had today . . . centred around teachers. Although they love their job — this is their calling; they give of their time, out of their own pockets for the kids that they serve — many of them are wondering how much longer they can hold on. And unfortunately many of them or some of them have even made the very difficult decision to leave the profession.

I spoke today with a mother and daughter team outside. And I've heard this before. Family tradition of teaching — proud tradition. But I've heard from teachers that they're finding it more and more difficult. Although they love the job and they know the value of education and how important that investment is and how important the work that they do is, they're having a hard time encouraging others to join the profession right now.

Mr. Speaker, these educators deserve our respect. They deserve our thanks, and they deserve to know that we support them and we also know that enough is enough. And I want them to know, on behalf of the official opposition, we see you. We know why you're here. We thank you. And I want to also say: courage, there are better days ahead.

Mr. Speaker, with that I invite all members to join me, the official opposition in thanking and welcoming these teachers for being here with us today. We owe you a great debt, and our kids are so lucky to have you in their classrooms.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Leader of the Opposition in welcoming and thanking these teachers for their service, and I'd like to take just a brief moment to name three individuals who are with us here today.

First of all, seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, is Peggy Welter. Peggy is a resident of Regina and she's also a member of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation executive. Peggy teaches senior English in Prairie Valley School Division. She's a leader in her community and her profession, and I'm so thankful that she's here with us today.

I'd also like to point out two teachers who are also seated in your gallery: Samantha Taylor and Jennie Davies. These two esteemed professionals have given 50 years of combined service to the people and the children and youth of Saskatchewan. In those 50 years, they estimate over 20,000 hours of extracurricular involvement that goes above and beyond the duties of teaching to their volunteer time. Twenty thousand hours. I want to thank you for that time and that service.

It's been applied to things like musical theatre, coaching basketball, golf, leadership programs, a science homework help club, choir club, outdoor ed club — the list goes on and on. Mr. Speaker, I could say so much, but I'm going to save some of that for an upcoming member statement.

But at this time I'd like to ask all members of the Assembly to join me in thanking these professionals for their service and to

welcome them here to their Assembly today.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd seek 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.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an absolute delight to be on my feet to introduce members from the Connaught Comet senior basketball team, seated in your gallery in the third row over there.

We have with us today Lena, who is no stranger to me; Elizah; Zada; Julie; and Ava. It's been a real pleasure helping out this season at my alma mater, Mr. Speaker, working with these girls on the team, seeing them grow as people and as players.

And I want to give a big shout-out to their assistant coach, Ava's dad, Ted; to Ms. Johnson over at Connaught who helps out with the team; and their conditioning guru and mentor, Noor. And of course the big cheese over there at Connaught, that is their head coach, Mr. White. He is tremendous. They love him despite the fact that he tortures them with regular 7 a.m. practices, conditioning practices, the whole gambit. He's an incredible educator. He's super passionate about these students on and off the court.

I know that when he thinks of these girls, he thinks about their heart and their hustle and their hard work and everything they've been giving this season, Mr. Speaker. And it's been paying off. They recently got an invite to Campbell Collegiate's Basketball Beat, which is set to happen later this month, which is a big deal for them. And of course that tournament is in question, Mr. Speaker, given the announcement this week.

These girls are here to show support for their teachers because they know that their teachers' teaching conditions are their learning conditions. And I'm so proud of them for showing up today and showing that support for their teachers. And they're here to ask this government to bargain a fair deal so that they can have their extracurriculars.

Mr. Speaker, when I think about the role of extracurriculars, growing up as a young woman — the confidence they build, the relationships you build — this is truly the highlight of childhood, Mr. Speaker. So I want to commend them for being here today.

And what also struck me today, Mr. Speaker, is that I was one year older than Lena — I think it was in 2000 — when I joined my basketball coach at this building. Teachers, back then, withdrew extracurriculars for five days, and students joined them at this legislature. And they eventually got a fair contract, and that's what teachers need today. They need a fair contract, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome Lena, Elizah, Zada, Julie, Ava to this their Legislative Assembly. And I hope I don't mess this up. I just want to say C-O, C-O-M, C-O-M-E-T-S. Go Comets!

[13:45]

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a former teacher, obviously lots of colleagues here and I welcome them, but I want to take a moment to welcome my sister to her Legislative Assembly today. I haven't had the opportunity to do this before. Her name is Kirsten Turlock, and she also is a teacher, so here on double duty, but I think most importantly here to support her brother as the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Regina Walsh Acres.

But . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'll leave that. Ms. Turlock is a grade 1 teacher at St. Kateri School, is a phenomenal teacher. I'm so proud to have her as my sister. She is a dedicated mother to two little boys, and a coach, and just an amazing community member. So I want to offer my welcome to her Assembly.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to also acknowledge two folks in your gallery: Joan Pratchler and Jacqueline Roy. These are two amazing . . . Ms. Roy is a current teacher, and Ms. Pratchler — Madame — is a former principal, our candidates in Regina Northeast and Regina Rochdale.

It's been an honour to get to know them over a number of years. And I've got to say I'm glad that I was not at St. Mary when Madame Pratchler was principal because that just seems like a scary place to be. She was an amazing educator, and I look forward to serving with her in this Assembly. So I'd ask all members of the Assembly to join with me to welcome my sister and Joan and Jacqueline to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I'd just like to caution the people in the gallery you're not to hold up a sign. Don't hold the sign up or I'll have security remove you.

I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce a few individuals seated in the east gallery. First of all, no stranger to this Assembly — she's been here a few times — my mom, Donna Sarauer, is here. She's sporting her Brier volunteer jacket. Her and my mom are in town for the whole week, luckily for me, volunteering with the Brier. It's sort of the annual focal point for Sarauers throughout the province, so very excited to have them here.

But also joining with them, very special for me — unfortunately for them; they were supposed to be in town only till yesterday, flying home yesterday, but as most people know it was impossible to leave this province yesterday, so their flight got delayed till today — my sister is here, Stacey Wormsbecker with her husband, Brett Wormsbecker and her daughter, my niece, Norah, who's also here today.

They hail from Kelowna. It was really nice to have them here this

weekend visiting family. Stacey's a project manager at PCL. She's been doing that job since she got her engineering degree at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. And little Norah is just a few days younger than my youngest son, so they have a lot of fun playing together, terrorizing their parents. And it's really nice that they had the opportunity to see legislative proceedings today before they had to fly back to Kelowna.

So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to our Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to fix the crisis in health care. The undersigned residents wish to bring to our attention that there were 951 health care closures across rural Saskatchewan between August 2019 and July 2023, and that 407 of those closures were to Saskatchewan emergency rooms, Mr. Speaker; that for the first time an emergency room in one of our major cities was shut down due to staffing shortages; and Saskatchewan has the longest wait times for knee and hip replacement surgeries.

We know absolutely that it's unacceptable that women in this province are being forced to travel out of province for routine breast cancer diagnostic care. And we know that Saskatchewan people deserve to have adequate and accessible health care that's there when they need it.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately address the short-staffing crisis in health care and work with health care workers on solutions to improve patient care.

This is signed today by individuals from Prince Albert and Regina, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens concerned by that government's failure to support education, concerned parents and grandparents, concerned students, concerned community members, concerned education workers and teachers — the best education workers and teachers going, Mr. Speaker — teachers that want to be in their classroom but instead are taking a stand to say enough is enough. Education matters, and students matter, Mr. Speaker.

The petition identifies the damaging cuts and underfunding of that government, made clear by the fact that 15,000 more students are in classrooms from 2016-17 but with only one additional teacher — 15,000 more students but one additional teacher. As a result, class size and complexity are a serious challenge with classrooms at a breaking point and students being shortchanged of the education they deserve by that government.

The prayer reads as follows:

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

These petitions are signed by concerned citizens and good folks from Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Shellbrook, Warman, Saskatoon, and Regina. I so submit.

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

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

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've been rising to present this petition for nearly four years starting in 2020, and just last week we saw that the Government of British Columbia has made a move to join the seven other provinces in Canada that provide some sort of financial support for individuals struggling with fertility.

Now, Mr. Speaker, members in this Assembly will be familiar with the text of this petition I've presented a number of times. One in six people will struggle with fertility in their lifetime, and despite public health care being a right in Canada, there's no support in Saskatchewan for those struggling to conceive, needing in vitro fertilization treatments, Mr. Speaker.

The text of this petition speaks to one cycle costing upwards of \$10,000, but recent comments from Fertility Matters have updated that figure to now approach \$20,000 per cycle, Mr. Speaker — out of reach for far too many. Mr. Speaker, science is supposed to move us forward, and families are supposed to be something that you get to have, not something that you struggle to afford.

With that, I'll read the prayer:

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

The signatories of this petition today are from Lumsden and Weyburn. I do so present.

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

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that inflation is the highest it has been for more than three decades; that half of Saskatchewan residents were living paycheque to paycheque before transportation and food costs skyrocketed in 2022; that the Sask Party government's 32 new taxes, fee hikes

make life even more expensive, unaffordable, all while harming struggling industries like tourism, culture, fitness, and overall small businesses.

While the other provinces acted, the Sask Party government ignored the opposition call for a gas price relief plan.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition are residents of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. I do so present.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise 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, 2023 increase, Saskatchewan's minimum wage remains the lowest in Canada at \$14 an hour.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the official opposition has twice introduced paid sick leave legislation since the onset of the pandemic, calling for a minimum of 10 paid sick days. As we all know, paid sick leave has been proven to save employers money while making workplaces healthier and safer for all workers.

Mr. Speaker, 71 per cent of workers in Canada have experienced workplace violence or harassment, and in 2023 the Canadian Bar Association at their AGM [annual general meeting] adopted a resolution discouraging the use of nondisclosure agreements to silence whistle-blowers and victims of abuse, discrimination, and harassment in the workplace. 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 come from North Battleford and Lloydminster. I do so present.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm on my feet presenting a new petition in this Chamber. This is a petition calling on the Sask Party government to open up vacant Sask Housing units. We know that over 3,000 units sit empty and vacant across Saskatchewan — 129 in P.A. [Prince Albert], 280 in Saskatoon, 700 in Regina — that's about one in four units

sitting vacant, unused; that some of these units require renovation, but the Sask Party government has cut the maintenance and renovation budget by over 40 per cent over the last decade; that thousands of people in Saskatchewan are unhoused. According to provincial point-in-time counts, those numbers are growing year over year. The vast majority of unhoused people in Saskatchewan are Indigenous, a legacy of colonialism. And that homelessness has tremendous cost, Mr. Speaker, the human cost borne by unhoused people and the financial cost paid by taxpayers; that the province's expenditures on emergency hotels, which have tripled under this Premier, is just one example of that cost.

The prayer calls on the government:

To renovate Sask Housing units that require renovation, make units available and affordable, and ensure that all currently vacant Sask Housing units are occupied by October 2024.

The signatories reside in Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Regina Hosts 2024 Brier

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Curling's biggest stage is back in Regina, and after 44 years without the Brier cup, Team Saskatchewan is looking hungry. After winning a tight 7-6 first game with Prince Edward Island, things were clearly not going to be easy. Then Team Saskatchewan took on Team Canada in a back-and-forth draw, which again led to the close finish of 7-6. With the national team out of the way, Saskatchewan looked to challenge our prairie rival in Team Alberta on Sunday. And on Sunday Team Alberta and the four-time Brier champion Kevin Koe were defeated 6-5 by Team Saskatchewan. This left the home team with a beautiful opening record of 3-0 at this year's Brier.

The Saskatchewan growth plan set an ambitious target to increase travel spending by 50 per cent to more than 3 billion annually by 2030. High-profile sporting events such as the Brier attract out-of-province visitors who are fundamental to building a strong visitor economy and helping to achieve this goal.

Thank you to the volunteers, host committee members, and everyone who is working hard to make 2024 Montana's Brier a truly memorable event. And thank you to all the athletes, coaches, and support staff allowing us to enjoy what will surely be a world-class display of curling. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

[14:00]

Saskatchewan Educators Express Concerns with Classroom Conditions

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak of two teachers who have joined us today in your gallery: Samantha Taylor and Jennie Davies. Now I introduced them earlier here in

their Assembly and we all learned that these are veteran educators, professionals with decades of experience between them. They're mostly here to say that they're burning out. They say that their jobs have never been this hard.

In one classroom, Jennie saw one student who is five grade levels below the class in reading and math, two neurodivergent students, three students with severe mental health issues and needs, six students with special learning needs, four students who are new to the English language, and next to no supports there to help these students learn. That was just in one classroom, Mr. Speaker — one.

Samantha has taught thousands of children at 17 different schools over 30 years. She feels like she has lots left to give, but recently she has had to say, "no more," and she's leaving the profession. She's leaving because of the policies of this government. She's so burnt-out that she's leaving the field she's dedicated her life to and the kids that she's come to love.

It's a story we keep hearing, and it's wrong. Teachers should not be burning out and teachers should not be leaving the profession. And students should not be falling through the cracks because of the failings of this government. Our teachers deserve better. Our children certainly deserve better. And this government needs to do better, or we will. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Kin Clubs Hold Annual TeleMiracle Fundraiser

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How do you pull a province together and make giving an emotionally charged celebration of community? Well the Kinsmen, Kinettes, and Kin clubs across this province have clearly figured it out. It was a dream made reality these last 48 years in Saskatchewan, and it's so ingrained in our lives that if you say "ring those phones," depending on our ages, we have good memories including Alvin Law and *Sesame Street's* own Bob McGrath, or Brad Johner and Beverley Mahood.

6,112,717 is the total dollars this year raised in our marathon of giving inspiration, compelling us to open our hearts and wallets to invest in the well-being of those who are around us. The dollar number is impressive, but even more impactful is the number of lives and families who are touched through the generosity and hearts behind those dollars.

It was enjoyable for me to see a bit behind the curtain this year again watching the Kin clubs of my area raise funds and man the phones through that 20-hour marathon, but 48 hours without sleep to fulfill their motto, serving our community's greatest needs.

The U of S Agros have been pushing a bed between Saskatoon and Regina since 1982 to do their part in raising awareness and money. This year 100,000 was the total. And if you ask the members from Melville-Saltcoats and Arm River, myself, or the Premier, pushing that bed is a little tougher than it looks.

A shout-out to Greg Frey and Jaden Wood-Sparrow, who for the last four years have pushed that bed down and up the Blackstrap hill. So again, thanks to Saskatchewan for your commitment to

make the needs of others your opportunity to ring a phone and write a cheque to make a difference for someone next door. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatoon's Prairie Lily Curling League Hosts Rock the River Cup

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The love of curling goes deep in Saskatchewan. And while the best in the country compete right here in Regina at the Brier, another exciting tournament takes place this weekend. This weekend Saskatoon hosts the Prairie Lily Rock the River Cup.

The Prairie Lily Curling League is a non-profit organization aimed at providing a safe and fun space for members of the 2SLGBTQ+ [two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, plus] community and their allies to enjoy the sport of curling in a friendly, non-competitive environment. The curling league started in 2014 with a group of five curlers and their friends who wanted to start Saskatchewan's first queer-friendly curling league. The league has since been based out of the Nutana Curling Club.

In 2022 Saskatoon was home to the Canadian Pride Curling Championships with Saskatoon's own Dustin Anderson, Avry Cline, Spencer McKnight, and Daniel Carriere winning the championship on home ice. This year Canadian Pride Curling Championships will take place in St. John's and two teams will be representing Saskatchewan.

I want to thank the hard-working volunteer board for organizing this event. Thank you to board members Jason, Michael, Avry, Dustin, Spencer, and Dawn. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in wishing all those involved in the Rock the River Cup this coming weekend good luck on the ice, and wish the teams heading to St. John's great success.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Suncrest College Launches Indigenous Mining Skills Training Program

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a transformative initiative that has taken root in our community, marking a significant milestone in the intersection of innovation, opportunity, and inclusivity. On January 22nd the launch of an Indigenous pre-employment program for potash mining at Suncrest College in Yorkton heralded a new era of collaboration and progress in our region's mining sector. This pioneering program, the result of a partnership between Morris Interactive, Mosaic potash, and the Yorkton Tribal Council represents a concerted effort to address long-standing barriers to entry faced by Indigenous individuals in the workforce.

By integrating digital technologies and best practices into training curricula, the program not only equips participants with essential skills, but also fosters a culture of diversity and inclusion through our mining sector. The benefits of this initiative extend far beyond the classroom. By providing Indigenous communities with the access to meaningful

employment opportunities in potash mining, individuals are empowered to achieve economic self-sufficiency and prosperity. Moreover we are enriching our industry with a wealth of perspectives, knowledge, and talent, driving innovation and sustainability for years to come.

I commend the visionary leadership and unwavering dedication of all partners involved in bringing this program to fruition. Together we are charting a path towards a more equitable, resilient, and prosperous future for all residents of Yorkton and beyond. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Government and Opposition Positions on Carbon Tax

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As of January 1st, 2024, the Government of Saskatchewan has stopped collecting the federal carbon tax on home heating in Saskatchewan. As a result, according to Stats Canada, Saskatchewan's inflation rate dropped from 2.7 per cent in December down to 1.9 per cent in January, well below the national average of 2.9 per cent.

Our position on the federal carbon tax has been crystal clear for years and so has the NDP's [New Democratic Party]. In 2016 the member from Regina Walsh Acres tweeted, and I quote: "My take on the carbon tax and climate change — spoiler alert — I'm in favour," he said. In 2016, the Leader of the Opposition voted against a motion that opposed the federal government's plan to impose a national carbon tax.

In 2019, the member for Saskatoon Nutana said a need for a carbon tax is, and I quote, "not up for debate any longer." The same member then said, "We don't think of a carbon tax as a tax. This is a price on pollution and a necessary one."

The NDP has been clear that when it comes to the federal carbon tax, they stand in lockstep with Justin Trudeau. But after realizing that Canadians weren't falling for the pricing scheme, they now claim they've opposed the tax. Saskatchewan people know better, Mr. Speaker.

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

Capital Funding to Add Classroom Space

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our province is growing at a remarkable rate. We're seeing more young families call Saskatchewan home every day. And that's why our government is committed to providing the best education possible for our youth. Part of that commitment is providing additional funding for more classroom space. Earlier last month, Mr. Speaker, our government made the announcement that 32 million in new funding will be allocated to address classroom space issues. And that's in addition to the \$16 million of investment for 23 relocatable classrooms and two classroom moves as a part of the 2023-24 budget.

Mr. Speaker, this funding directly supports areas where we are seeing the fastest population growth. Not just Saskatoon and Regina, but Humboldt, Lloydminster, Lumsden, Pilot Butte, Weyburn, and Warman are all seeing more families put down roots. With this investment 48 million is being allocated to

provide 68 new relocatables for the '24-25 school year. This funding will help school divisions better manage enrolment pressures in the fastest growing areas of the province.

Mr. Speaker, we're committed to working with our communities and our schools to address this growth, and we trust local communities to make decisions that lead to the best outcomes for our youth.

Mr. Speaker, we're committed to building stronger families, stronger communities, and a bright future for Saskatchewan. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Government's Fiscal Management and Federal Carbon Tax

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government has failed to deliver the cost-of-living relief that Saskatchewan people need. Under this Premier's watch, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the worst job creation record in the country, and we lead the nation when it comes to mortgages in arrears.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier was listening, he wouldn't need me to tell him that Saskatchewan people need some relief. Why hasn't the Premier scrapped the fuel tax to give Saskatchewan people the relief that they so need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to affordability we've stood on the floor of this legislature many times and discussed the over \$2 billion in affordability measures that are in place, Mr. Speaker, many of them income tested to ensure that we are achieving results, like taking 112,000 people off the tax rolls, the provincial tax rolls altogether. Mr. Speaker, the residents are paying less tax than they were 10 and 15 years ago in this province, in particular all of those that may be in the lower income brackets in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to job creation in this province, in 2020 following an unprecedented pandemic, Mr. Speaker, there was job creation in this province. The job numbers increased by about 50,000 that particular year, Mr. Speaker. The year following, 2021, another 15,300 more jobs were created in the province; 10,900 the year after that. And this most recent year just under 20,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker, which is leading this province to having some of the fastest population growth in the nation of Canada, the third-lowest unemployment rate, and the second-highest number of jobs per capita of any province or territory in the nation.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I'll address something that was said earlier by the member from Estevan, and it was this: she knows very well, the Premier knows very well that this side, we do not support the carbon tax.

But I'm also old enough to remember, Mr. Speaker, when the Premier voted for our motion calling on the federal government

to scrap their unfair treatment on home heating oil. Now, Mr. Speaker, remitting an unfair and uneven tax isn't right but neither, Mr. Speaker, is sitting on your hands and failing to get a deal. Mr. Speaker, we say this because on Friday we learned that neither the SaskEnergy minister nor the Premier even bothered to pick up a phone to try to get a deal from the feds.

Mr. Speaker, that is not leadership. Why didn't the Premier even bother to pick up the phone and actually do his homework, get a deal that benefits the people in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, those conversations have happened with the federal government. Most recently I had a conversation with Minister Guilbeault when we were at the COP28 [Conference of the Parties 28] climate conference in Dubai, Mr. Speaker.

Those conversations have happened between multiple ministers and the federal government. And what we see time and time again, Mr. Speaker, from this federal coalition Liberal-NDP government all too often is policy decisions that are not treating Canadians fairly. Mr. Speaker, what we saw most recently — and credit to the NDP to finally see the light, Mr. Speaker — we saw a decision that was going to favour one area of the nation and Canadians in one area of the nation over other areas.

What this minister has done, Mr. Speaker, has rectified that. It's about carbon tax fairness, if there is such a thing, Mr. Speaker. And it is still the policy position of this government that that tax, that silly and ridiculous, harmful, inflationary carbon tax should be removed on everything for everyone, Mr. Speaker. And if the entire opposition has changed their position across the board on that, they should inform a couple of the members whose comments I'll read into the record shortly.

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

Ms. Beck: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we have consensus on this side, but there's also consensus in this province that this tired and out-of-touch government gave up a long time ago in working for the interests of Saskatchewan people. This is a Premier who is clearly, clearly more interested in picking fights than actually delivering for Saskatchewan people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, he has time to fly to India, time to fly to Dubai, but he can't pick up the phone and get a deal for Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, he didn't even try. Why can't the Premier do his job, pick up the phone, and get that fair deal that Saskatchewan people deserve?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pretty sure I answered that in the last question where multiple ministers have talked to the federal government and have been talking for a number of years with respect to the harmful inflationary impacts of this ridiculous carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, which is not lowering emissions in any way. It's driving up the cost of our fuel every time we go to the service station, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

It's driving up the cost of our groceries each and every time we go to the grocery store, Mr. Speaker, of which members on that side think is okay. The member, Mr. Speaker . . . one of them, I can't remember which one, would also say, "I would also say, why shouldn't consumers actually pay the price of carbon for producing food?" Mr. Speaker, he went on to say, "We don't think that the carbon tax is a tax. It's a necessary price on pollution." Mr. Speaker, and spoiler alert, he was in favour.

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

Contract Negotiations with Teachers

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, it's clear that this government has given up trying to offer any cost-of-living relief for the people of this province. They can scrap the fuel tax today, but they chose not to.

And they're also, Mr. Speaker, failing when it comes to our kids' classrooms. We're joined today, Mr. Speaker, by thousands of teachers from across this province. And they're here fighting for education, fighting for our kids. Mr. Speaker, why are they here in the galleries instead of in the classrooms that they love? Because this government has refused to bargain in good faith and negotiate a deal that includes class size and complexity.

Now why won't that Premier bargain in good faith with the teachers who have come here to their legislature?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, let me say thank you to all the teachers across the province that have been out advocating on behalf of their profession, Mr. Speaker, advocating on behalf of the supports in their classroom. They've been at my office in Shellbrook a number of weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, down here in Regina today. I know they've been at the Minister of Education's office, as well as a number of other MLAs in here, Mr. Speaker. And most certainly that advocacy on behalf of their profession and the students in the classrooms I think is admirable, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, is it is a goal and the intent of this government to ensure that our students and our teachers remain in the classroom, Mr. Speaker. And we would ask that the teachers' union return to the bargaining table. That is the way for them to ensure that we are continuing to have our teachers in the classroom, Mr. Speaker.

What you have seen, Mr. Speaker, is a teachers' union that has chosen to go to the bargaining table for 30 minutes in the last five months. That is not proper representation of the teachers across this province, Mr. Speaker, and most certainly I think parents in this province, parents of children in their classrooms, expect more.

Mr. Speaker, the government is continuing to move to find points of collaboration and points that we can agree on, whether it be in the wages that are offered, whether it be on a number of other topics. There are places, there are points where we may not find that collaboration, Mr. Speaker, but in order for our teachers and our students to remain in the classroom, Mr. Speaker, we do need the teachers' union to return to the bargaining table.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier takes great pains to put some sort of distinction between the teachers' union and the teachers who are here today. Let me tell you what: they have a 95 per cent mandate to be here, Mr. Speaker, and that's more of a mandate than he has.

But, Mr. Speaker, this arrogance and entitlement is what people have come to expect when it comes to this government. Mr. Speaker, they're not here because they want platitudes or good words. Mr. Speaker, they're here because they want a deal, and they need this government to get back to the table and negotiate a deal that deals with class size and complexity.

Mr. Speaker — and I'll say this, and I'll say this clearly — if that government is not interested in doing that, then I'll tell you, an NDP government will. Mr. Speaker, this is a government that doesn't want to do the work. They don't want to pick up the phone, and they don't want to work for the people of Saskatchewan. They're more interested in picking fights than they are actually delivering results.

When will the Premier finally find his feet to act, to do his job, to do what's right and get a fair deal for teachers and for our kids in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate. The fastest way and the most sure way for our teachers to remain and our students to remain in the classroom is for the teachers' union to return to the bargaining table. Mr. Speaker, they've been at the bargaining table for 30 minutes in the last five months, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan parents, and I would say teachers, expect better representation than that.

Mr. Speaker, there are points where we will find collaboration at that bargaining table and points of agreement, and we need the teachers' union to return to that table in order to do so. There are points where we may not, Mr. Speaker. In a jurisdiction where, by StatsCan's numbers, Saskatchewan individuals, families invest more in education than any other province in the nation, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to be able to meet a twenty-three and a half per cent wage increase. However, Mr. Speaker, what we have done is try to put multiple offers on the table for the teachers to consider, Mr. Speaker.

And when it comes to classroom size and complexity — and I would point to the next couple of days on the government's continued commitment in this space — since the last budget, Mr. Speaker, there's been fifty-three and a half million dollars provided in this space. That's a testament to the government's commitment that we need to continue to work with school divisions and teachers in funding classroom size and complexity.

Mr. Speaker, there's additional commitments to come in the next number of days; however, those dollars are also going to flow through our locally elected school divisions, Mr. Speaker. But always happy to work with teachers to ensure that we are providing the best learning environment for our children.

And last, Mr. Speaker, I would just end how I started, Mr.

Speaker. We do want teachers and students to remain in the classroom, and the quickest way for that to happen is for the teachers' union to return to and remain at the bargaining table.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, what a shame it is to see the Premier standing here and show the same disrespect to teachers in here that he's been showing to them on billboards across this province for the last year.

And then he's got the gall to talk about local board autonomy when his government has been running down and attacking local board autonomy for more than a decade. After 10 years of underfunding from this tired and out-of-touch government the only autonomy that local boards have left is the autonomy to make cuts every time they get an insufficient budget from this Premier's government. That's the only autonomy that they've got left.

Teachers here today, they love what they do, but the pressures and underfunding in our classrooms can't go on like this. Enough is enough. It's time for a deal that addresses class size and complexity.

When will this minister finally show teachers some respect and negotiate a fair deal on class size and complexity?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has indicated, government believes that students and teachers belong in the classroom and that union leadership belongs at the bargaining table, Mr. Speaker. Thirty minutes in five months is not going to get the deal done, Mr. Speaker.

This is a government that wants to get a deal done. We've made movement on several of the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] leadership's demands, Mr. Speaker. Annualization of class size and complexity funding, we've offered that. Managing their own dental plan, we've offered that, Mr. Speaker. Annualization of two pilot projects, Mr. Speaker, we've offered that. And the same salary deal that MLAs get, the STF asked for that, we've offered that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's time for the union leadership to get back to the bargaining table so that teachers and students can be back in the classroom.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the minister is in the correct city to talk about education today because the teachers are here too. In fact there are thousands of teachers at their legislature today who are watching, and even more teachers across this province watching and focusing on his words from home. And they're going to remember this day. They're going to remember this day as the day that the Saskatchewan NDP committed to bargaining on class size and composition at the table with teachers, and that this was also the day that this tired and out-of-touch government doubled down and said no.

Mr. Speaker, why won't the Sask Party listen to the teachers of Saskatchewan and say yes to a fair deal that includes class size and complexity, or will that minister stand up and again say no?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've been very clear so far. We're very clear today. The best way to get a deal done, Mr. Speaker, and to ensure that students and teachers are back in the classroom, is for the union leadership to come back to the bargaining table and stay there and get a deal done.

Mr. Speaker, we're not going to be negotiating class size and complexity in a provincially bargained agreement or here on the floor of the House, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're not going to take the responsibility of locally elected school boards and hand that over to a provincial union, Mr. Speaker. That's not something that this government's prepared to do. Again, we want to get a deal done, Mr. Speaker. For that to happen, we need the union leadership back at the bargaining table.

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

Mr. Love: — Sir, you won't negotiate here in the Assembly, but you'll negotiate through billboards and Twitter every day of the week.

Mr. Speaker, this minister talks about respecting boards of education. Well here's what the board of Regina Catholic Schools said in a letter just three days ago:

We have continued to speak with the minister and his office over the past few weeks to request that they address class size and complexity by showing up for education in the provincial budget.

Another quote: "We desperately require this increase and have spoken about the need to address class size and complexity."

Mr. Speaker, everyone, everyone in education agrees class size and complexity need to be addressed. Why won't this minister get a deal so that teachers and boards can fix this problem today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, talking about speaking with boards of education, I've met with 26 of 27 school boards over the last several months. Meeting with that last 27th here in the next week or two, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you one thing that boards of education across the province are united on. They are united on the fact that issues around class size and composition are a local board right, decisions to be made by locally elected school board members, Mr. Speaker. I've been engaging with school boards all across the province, Mr. Speaker, from Regina to Saskatoon, Creighton, Lloydminster, North Battleford, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're having some great discussions on investing into education further. Mr. Speaker, just this school year we've invested over \$300 million into classroom supports, Mr. Speaker, and added to that in-year with various pilot projects and

additional complexity funding. Mr. Speaker, we've got a provincial budget in a couple weeks, and we look forward to making another record investment in the education of this province.

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

Health Care Staffing

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those 27 boards are united in their belief that this government isn't up to the task of fixing the problem in education. Now this tired and out-of-touch government is failing teachers, but they're failing to deliver on health care as well.

Under this Premier's watch, rural Saskatchewan has lost 21 per cent of its registered nurses. That's one in five. 474 registered nurses gone — the largest drop in all of the provinces in this study.

Does the Minister of Health think this exodus of registered nurses under his watch is acceptable?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and of course the data that the member opposite is citing is from CIHI [Canadian Institute for Health Information], and CIHI, as has been explained in this House a number of times before, relies on voluntary survey data, Mr. Speaker.

We on this side of the House rely on the actual data, the actual numbers, which of course, Mr. Speaker, since our government took power in 2007 we've added over 5,000 nurses and over 1,000 more licensed physicians to this province, Mr. Speaker. That's a 40 per cent increase in nurses, Mr. Speaker, and a 62 per cent increase in physicians over what the NDP offered when they were in power in this government, Mr. Speaker.

We're continuing to address and stabilize the rural and remote health care situation, Mr. Speaker. We know there's more work to be done, but we have a health human resources action plan that is targeted and addressing those issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Mr. Speaker, we are losing our rural health care workforce at the highest rate in the country. The numbers don't just show cuts to nurses; they show that we're going in the wrong direction on doctors too.

Those same numbers show Saskatchewan lost 35 doctors of all types to other provinces in 2022, the second-highest loss amongst the provinces. And in rural areas, since this Premier came to office, Sun Country lost 25 per cent of their specialists, Cypress Health lost 11 per cent of their specialists, Prairie North Health lost 29 per cent of their specialists.

When will the Sask Party stop taking rural Saskatchewan for granted and start making sure people can access health care close

to home?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And obviously our government is not taking rural health care for granted. We're building hospitals. We're building health care facilities. The opposite members closed those facilities when they had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of numbers, Mr. Speaker, our government is proud of the recruitment efforts that we have been making recently with our health human resources action plan. 964 nursing graduates have been hired since December of 2022 alone, Mr. Speaker. More than 550 seats have been added in 18 post-secondary programs in our institutions, Mr. Speaker, so that students can fill these seats and will soon be employed in our health care system in this province.

[14:30]

We've added seats to the College of Medicine. We've added seats to the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies for the health care aide program. Mr. Speaker, we have 298 hard-to-recruit positions that have been filled as a direct result of our rural and remote recruitment incentive that we have offered so that we can continue to address and stabilize the health care challenges in rural Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party likes to spin the numbers, but the real numbers are in, and the staffing crisis in health care is nothing new. This tired and out-of-touch government doesn't have to take my word for it. They can listen to the folks at the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. Last week, one day after we highlighted the numbers showing how bad health care staffing is in rural Saskatchewan, SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] announced their support for a grow-your-own plan to train and hire more health care workers, something that we've been calling for for months.

If the Sask Party won't listen to us, Mr. Speaker, will they at least listen to SARM and finally develop a grow-your-own plan to fix our health care?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and I met with SARM this morning, and we meet with them quite regularly on a quarterly basis and as required. And, Mr. Speaker, we'll be meeting with them again next week when they have their SARM convention.

Improving access to primary health care in rural communities is a priority for our government, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite speaks about nurse practitioners. There are a significant number of opportunities for nurse practitioners in rural

Saskatchewan. We have dozens of positions posted and available for nurse practitioners in our rural communities, Mr. Speaker.

We also have a number of incentives available for those positions. Nurse practitioner relocation grants offer nurse practitioners to relocate to communities under 10,000 people up to a \$40,000 incentive for a five-year return of service, Mr. Speaker. We also have the rural and remote recruitment incentive, \$50,000 over three years, Mr. Speaker.

These are just some of the incentives that we're offering. We continue to have these conversations with our rural partners, and we're proud, Mr. Speaker, of the successes that we've been having. Thank you.

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

Social Services' Policies on Emergency Hotel Stays

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing our teachers, our schools. They're redlining our health care system. And they're absolutely failing to live up to their commitment to be the most open and accountable government in Saskatchewan history.

Just look at the mess at the Sunrise Motel. Months after we asked specific questions, we learned that a motel that used to get 282 bucks from the Ministry of Social Services received over \$220,000 after the member from Northeast, the Sask Party MLA, got elected, Mr. Speaker.

And once we got some sunlight on that Sunrise scandal, we heard from the Minister of Social Services that no other Sask Party MLAs were involved, no other hotels were involved. We then learned two hotels owned or invested by that member from Northeast were receiving the highest rates from the Ministry of Social Services and inflating their rates more than any other hotel in the province.

Can the minister explain how so much public money has been wasted under his watch?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, in terms of full transparency, that's exactly what the ministry has been. The member asked for extensive information and that was provided earlier this year, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we work very hard to house clients who are having challenges in emergency situations — those on income assistance, but those on child and family as well, Mr. Speaker. The amount of hotels that have been willing to work with those clients, particularly in Regina, has decreased, unfortunately, with the challenges and with the hard-to-house individuals, Mr. Speaker.

So as a result of these questions, we've made some changes, the ministry's made some changes in terms of procurement. There's going to be an RFP [request for proposal] process to get a block of rooms in Regina and Saskatoon with damage deposits to see if we can get a better deal for the taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, and

also ensuring there's quotes and the lowest bid comes forward in a nightly basis, Mr. Speaker.

So that's some of the work we're going to do. We're going to continue to work with the auditor. But, Mr. Speaker, we're going to look after vulnerable people in this province.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Government Launches Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategy

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today on a ministerial statement. With record capital investment and one of the most sustainable and highly competitive business environments in the world, Saskatchewan is growing at its fastest rate in the last century. Saskatchewan has the second-highest growth of private capital investment in the country at over \$14 billion and is projected to be number one in the nation in 2024. There are more people living and working in Saskatchewan than ever before. Year over year, Saskatchewan has added 12,900 new jobs. This growth is leading to more opportunities for residents than ever before.

Mr. Speaker, that's why I'm pleased to rise to inform the House today that the Premier has officially launched *Building the Workforce for a Growing Economy: The Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategy*. We've heard from employers the number one challenge they're facing as a barrier to the continued economic growth in our province is developing a labour force that can keep up with the opportunities that are being created here every single day. The labour market strategy is our road map to secure a labour force that keeps pace with the growing demands and opportunities of our economy.

The labour market strategy has three pillars. The first pillar is preparing Saskatchewan residents for jobs. We will ensure Saskatchewan residents have every opportunity to benefit from the jobs our economy is creating through training, upskilling, and prioritizing engagement of under-represented groups in our labour market. This includes increasing Indigenous participation in the labour force as well as looking at how the province can help reduce barriers for individuals with disabilities. Our world-class post-secondary institutions play a critical role in our strategy, ensuring students have access to the education they need to fill the in-demand jobs of the future.

The second pillar is recognizing skills in Saskatchewan. This means cutting red tape to more efficiently recognize credentials obtained in other parts of Canada or from around the world. Too many newcomers are held back from entering the workforce by lengthy and unnecessary regulatory processes. To address this issue, the government passed the first-in-the-nation labour mobility and fair practices Act and created the authority for government to work with regulators to cut through red tape — an Act that I would add, Mr. Speaker, has been copied across the country. The Act ensures that in circumstances where a credential is not being recognized, regulators must provide a detailed explanation and a remediation path, such that a credential will be recognized in a timely fashion.

The Act will be complemented by our province's nation-leading credential recognition service. And I actually heard a Liberal minister — not ones generally to say good things about the province — complimenting the province's initiative in this and acknowledging the nation-leading position Saskatchewan has to ensure Saskatchewan residents who have earned credentials outside of Saskatchewan are able to maximize their participation by working in the jobs that they have been trained in. The service assists regulators to streamline the assessment of international qualifications and supports individuals to become licensed to work in regulated occupations in Saskatchewan with a one-on-one pathfinding service tailored to the individual needs of clients.

And the third pillar is international recruitment. We are continuing to focus on international recruitment to attract skilled talent to Saskatchewan through the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program. This includes recent employer-led recruitment missions to Poland and to the Philippines which have helped employers across Saskatchewan recruit the talent that they need. To support the retention and integration of newcomers in Saskatchewan, the province will be investing more than \$14.4 million annually in settlement and newcomer supports.

This strategy outlines provincial investments in programs, services, and partnerships that align Saskatchewan's workforce with the evolving needs of industry. The strategy, through collaboration with our industry stakeholders who played an integral role in the development of the strategy, will help build a strong labour force that drives our economy and supports our communities. We're ensuring that investment into our province is supported and the growth translates into a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people. We want people to work in Saskatchewan and we want new people to move to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is in a strong position. We have the jobs. We have the opportunity. Today's launch of the labour market strategy will help Saskatchewan build a strong economy and a bright future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and my thanks to the minister for sharing a copy of his remarks in advance. Now, Mr. Speaker, with the second-lowest average rate of job growth among Canadian provinces from 2018 to date, it's about time that we see a real focus on jobs in Saskatchewan. In the last six years Saskatchewan's economic growth rate has averaged just slightly more than half a per cent per year, resulting in negative economic growth.

Between 2018 and 2023, rural unincorporated areas of Saskatchewan lost 40,600 jobs, suffering a 33 per cent reduction. Now while small communities in Saskatchewan gained 19,000 jobs, taken together rural and small communities in this province lost 21,600 jobs. Now looking at the province as a whole from 2018 to 2024, the average per cent increase in jobs per year is just 1.06 per cent, which is the lowest in Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, last week StatsCan released their five-year immigration rates, which have dropped again to 57.9 per cent from 72.2 per cent five years earlier. Mr. Speaker, this is a 20 per

cent drop in retention. Saskatchewan now loses 42 of every 100 immigrants who arrive. And with capital investment in Saskatchewan continuing to sit well below 2014 levels, we need an all-of-the-above approach when it comes to creating, attracting, and retaining good jobs, newcomers, and economic investment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the best time to address this was six years ago, but there is no time like the present, Mr. Speaker. And it is good to see a recognition from this government. Building a strong labour force that supports true prosperity is the core work of government, Mr. Speaker, and on behalf of the opposition, we look forward to more details and results.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. I would seek leave to move a motion of condolence.

The Speaker: — The Premier has requested leave to make a motion of condolence, and is leave granted to the Premier?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Leave has been granted. I recognize the Premier.

CONDOLENCE MOTION

Brian Mulroney

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues for granting leave. I want to thank everyone here today for your unanimous consent so that we can remember and recognize the life of the Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney.

Today while we mourn the loss of this political giant, we can also take time to celebrate the life that he had and the contributions that he made to our nation of Canada. Much has been written about him over the last few days. Much has been said about him over the last few days. And I read each of these articles with great interest, recalling the incredible impact that he had not only in Canada but the impact that he had on the world stage.

He will of course be remembered for an extraordinary election result in 1984, where the PCs [Progressive Conservatives] had the largest electoral victory in Canadian history, and then went on to secure back-to-back majority governments. As Canada's 18th prime minister he very quickly got to work after that election. He was prime minister of this nation for eight years. Eight years in politics can go by in the blink of an eye, Mr. Speaker. Looking back now, it's amazing what he and his government accomplished in that short period of time.

Ever the charmer, we recall him singing "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" with then president Ronald Reagan. It was a time when, while not always agreeing on matters, world leaders could and did get along at a very personal level. Those relationships made it easier to negotiate and get things done, and not only again in this nation but around the world.

And negotiate he did: the Canada-US [United States] acid rain treaty, the Canada-US free trade agreement, the Canada-US

Arctic co-operation agreement, and of course the North American Free Trade Agreement. He led Canada in campaigning against apartheid in South Africa and he was a champion of the independence of Ukraine. Above all he was a fiercely proud Canadian and a steadfast defender of our country's achievements and our place on the world stage.

Once at a conference in Europe, President Bush politely told him that the Europeans were tired of Canada speaking up too much. The former prime minister was justifiably upset and angry at this comment and he responded to President Bush in this way, and I quote, "Tell the Europeans that we're not renting a seat in Europe. Tell them to go the graveyards in France, in Italy, and Belgium. We paid for our seat."

Closer to home, Mr. Speaker, his government was instrumental in getting Canada's fiscal house in order. He made decisions that were not always popular but were necessary to ensure Canada's future prosperity.

[14:45]

In 1987 he opened talks with the provinces with the goal of having Quebec sign on to the Constitution, what we know and remember as the Meech Lake Accord. He received numerous awards and recognitions from countries around the globe including Canada's highest honour, the Companion of the Order of Canada.

Having not had the opportunity to meet him personally, I was intrigued by the personal stories and recollections that have been written over the course of the last number of days and some of the stories that I have heard from his children.

Having been raised in a working-class Irish-Catholic family in the remote community of Baie-Comeau, Quebec, he never forgot his roots. One of my favourites is the memory that was retold by Laureen Harper. After a visit with the Harpers at the prime minister's residence in Ottawa, Mr. Mulroney looked around and then looked at Mrs. Harper and said, and I quote, "Not bad for two electricians' kids."

Once out of public life, people tend to forget who we all are, whether it's at the national level or the provincial level. Well Mr. Mulroney realized this and in later years he would introduce himself as Ben Mulroney's father.

There is much that can be said and is being said about the Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney's accomplishments in his time in office and out, his dedication to this country, and the difference that he made in so many Canadian and world lives. But I'll end with his own words from some of his memoirs.

First his quote:

I actually did govern, not for the good headlines in 10 days, but for the better Canada in 10 years. I paid the price in media hostility and public disapproval, but I did so knowingly and willingly. Leadership is about courage, strength, and resolve often in the face of overwhelming criticism and adversity. It's about taking positions that you believe to be in Canada's long-term interests and sticking to them.

And about his departure from politics, a quote as well. "I leave with a happy heart and a sense of fulfillment at having done much and at all times having done my best for Canada."

And for that, for doing your best, for your commitment to our country, we say thank you. You will be missed dearly.

To his wife, Mila, and his children, Caroline and Ben, Nicolas and Mark, thank you so much for sharing your husband and your father with this nation. Be proud and comforted in the knowledge that we are all better for his service.

Mr. Speaker, I would conclude with moving the following motion:

That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of former prime minister Brian Mulroney and express its grateful appreciation of the contribution that he made to his country and to this province.

I so move.

The Speaker: — The Premier has moved:

That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of former prime minister Brian Mulroney and expresses its grateful appreciation of the contribution that he made to his country and this province.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Premier for his thoughtful remarks.

News of the loss of former prime minister, the Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney, has set off an outpouring of remembrances and condolences across the country, around the globe, and right here at home. And on behalf of the official opposition, I wish to extend our deepest sympathies to the former prime minister Mulroney's family, to his wife, Mila; their four children, Caroline, Ben, Mark, and Nicolas; and to their grandchildren. I also wish to send condolences to his friends, former colleagues, and to the entire country as we mourn the loss of a prominent figure in our nation's history, the nation's 18th prime minister.

Leading the country from 1984 to 1993, Brian Mulroney made an undeniable mark on this country. His record and the hard work and the impact of that work is still felt today. His record was one of ambition, success, and failures, like all leaders, and some things, I'm sure, we would have agreed on, and some not.

Brian Mulroney was the architect of what we know today as the North American Free Trade Agreement, one of the most significant trade relationships we have throughout the nation, and particularly significant here at home in Saskatchewan. That agreement is due to the hard work and dedication of the former prime minister, Brian Mulroney.

His environmental achievements, including the environmental protection Act, the environmental assessment Act, and the creation of eight national parks.

And he will also be remembered for being on the right side of history, for his strong opposition to apartheid in South Africa. He was a global leader on this front, and he set a strong example for other nations to follow — something we should all be proud of.

Brian Mulroney was also a great friend of Saskatchewan. And I've heard this story many times. After the '91 election, he and then Finance minister, Don Mazankowski, stood by Saskatchewan in sorting out the incredible disarray that our finances were in at that time.

Brian Mulroney was also an early proponent of what we now know as reconciliation. He helped establish the treaty land entitlement, a critical, a crucial act of economic reconciliation.

Former prime minister Mulroney's legacy will live on through these achievements and so many more that have lasting impacts on the country and the province as we know them today. We owe him a great debt, as we do to his family.

So again, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to send my most sincere condolences to Brian Mulroney's family, those who were close to him, and all of those who mourn this loss today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek leave to move a motion of transmittal.

The Speaker: — We have business before that. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the previous motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

TRANSMITTAL MOTION

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move:

That, notwithstanding rule 8(2) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, the Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, transmit copies of the official records of the tributes to the bereaved family in memory of former prime minister Mulroney.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved:

That, notwithstanding rule 8(2) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, the Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, transmit copies of the official records of the tributes to the bereaved family in memory of former prime minister Mulroney.

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 Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask for leave to move a motion regarding committee membership.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has asked leave to make changes to committee membership. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

MOTIONS

Committee Membership

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move:

That the name of Terry Jenson be added to the membership of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved:

That the name of Terry Jenson be added to the membership of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 149

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

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing the ongoing work that the critic will undertake in consulting on this bill, I'm happy to allow this bill to move to its next stages.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the minister that Bill No. 149 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 143

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

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to enter into adjourned debate today on Bill 143, *The Child Care Amendment Act, 2023*. We see with this Act, Mr. Speaker, it's stemming from the historic agreement that was reached for \$10-a-day child care, which the NDP certainly has been pushing for for many years, is more affordable access to child care, which has been a persistent issue for families and especially women across our province for many years. In total, Mr. Speaker, 1.2 billion will be provided to the province by the federal government to create a total of 28,000 new spaces within five years.

I want to mention, you know, going through the amendment Act, we see a number of tweaks here including that centres have to have boards of directors and parental advisory committees which are made up of parents of kids that are enrolled at those centres.

Non-profits are also now enabled to operate more than one facility at a time. And there is also restrictions around if a facility would lose their licence, that they cannot reapply for one year. There's, you know, instruction around paying fees and training.

There's also provision in here, Mr. Speaker, around the minister setting minimum wages and wage enhancements, which is overall good to see. Obviously extremely important seeing as this profession, ECEs [early childhood educator] are persistently difficult to recruit and retain especially due to the very low wages that have persisted for this profession. As we know, ECEs, this is a very female-dominated sector, and as with many female-dominated sectors across our province and in society as a whole, we see a real issue with wages that just simply aren't equitable when compared with wages for male-dominated sectors.

And so certainly for years, on this side of the House we've been pushing for a systemic solution to this issue rather than one-off wage enhancements for one category of workers. We've been pushing for pay equity legislation, Mr. Speaker, for all women in Saskatchewan. We remain one of only a few provinces in the country to have lagged behind, to have refused to implement, to

bring forward this legislation. It's really unfortunate to see, given so many of, you know, the indicators for women in this province being insufficient, including their economic well-being, Mr. Speaker.

So we continue to push the government, to encourage them to stop dragging their heels, to get on board with the rest of the country — most of the provinces in our country who have brought in pay equity legislation — to ensure that women are being valued the same way that men are being in their professions, in the work that they do. So important across our province.

[15:00]

So like I said, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at wages for these workers that have been under a living wage certainly, poverty wages, barely above minimum wage. So while we do see these, you know, one-off enhancements, it remains to be seen whether they will be sufficient to address the shortage of workers in this field.

We hear so much talk about labour shortages, Mr. Speaker, in this province, in this country. And you know, we've seen it rightfully pointed out by many folks, especially who represent workers in the labour movement, saying, we don't have a labour shortage, Mr. Speaker; we have a wage shortage. And that certainly does apply to this profession.

Beyond the wages, moving beyond the wages, we look at the lack of spaces in Saskatchewan, which I know, you know, the government has said they are aiming to address through the creation of new spaces. But we've seen a fairly recent report, Mr. Speaker, on child care access in Saskatchewan that shows a full 92 per cent of younger children in the province live in a child care desert. When you look at rural Saskatchewan, that's 100 per cent of kids, a full 100 per cent of kids living in a child care desert.

So you know, like I said, it's great to see this agreement. The details are important. We saw a botched rollout of the agreement which caused a lot of frustration and consternation for people who work in the sector, for families who are looking to gain access to spots. But you know, you can't just look at creating a blanket number of spaces. You're also obviously going to have to look at equitable distribution of these spaces in addressing the real lack particularly in rural Saskatchewan, and Saskatoon was also extremely high. So I really hope to see that from the government, concentration on where these spaces will be allocated.

I think, you know, beyond the wages, beyond the obvious need for spaces, the government had said they have targeted the creation of 6,000 spaces in the first year of this agreement, but unfortunately they failed quite miserably on that front, Mr. Speaker. Just barely over 2,200 of those 6,000 spaces were actually created in the first year. And when you look at the facilities that shut down in that same time, it was actually only a net gain of 642 spaces. So I mean obviously we hope to see the government doing much better in the coming years of this agreement in terms of that creation of spaces because so far it's been pretty lacklustre, obviously.

And there's so many families across this province who are struggling to be able to provide child care for their kids, particularly during, you know, a historic cost-of-living crisis. This is something that should be, you know, top priority for the government, is making sure that families in this province are able to have the spaces, to have that access to spaces, to have affordable \$10-a-day child care for their kids.

So you know, as with most other cost-of-living measures, we either don't see anything at all or we see, you know, a plan that's simply not meeting the mark in terms of what's needed here, Mr. Speaker. So really hope to see a lot more movement on that front in coming years of the agreement.

You know, we've noted, for women especially, who are already economically disadvantaged by virtue of the fact that this government refuses to bring in pay equity legislation, they're the ones who are most heavily impacted by these spaces, the lack of spaces and the promised creation. So we hope, unlike other measures to do with women's social and economic security which this government doesn't seem to pay a whole lot of attention to, that they will focus their attention on this agreement, get to work creating those spaces that they have promised to create and ensuring that there is equitable access to the spaces across the province and that workers are being compensated at a rate that is respectable, that is a living wage, and that will allow for a robust workforce to ensure that kids are well looked after.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I think at this point I will adjourn debate on Bill 143, *The Child Care Amendment Act, 2023*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 148

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

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate today on Bill No. 148, *The Film Content Information Act*. I understand that there have been quite a few changes in the film industry. I know that a lot of us have changed how we view films over the past 10 years, and I'll note that this bill aims to replace *The Film and Video Classification Act* of 2016.

I think a large portion of the changes here are related to theatres or public viewings of films and how they classify films in those settings. So it's certainly something that's quite important when you think about any sort of public viewing of a film and being informed about what you're actually viewing. It's something that audiences certainly need.

I don't think it looks like it applies to any of the online streaming

services. I know there's a complicated web of jurisdiction as we talk about online streaming and the province it's being viewed in, Mr. Speaker. But I know sometimes I have no awareness of sort of what I'm getting into when I open up something on an online streaming platform, and certainly, as the auntie to some young kids, it is something I rely on quite heavily, is knowing what the content is because my memory is not so good of what level of film I'm viewing.

It certainly seems like these are common-sense changes that are being made here, but of course we'll have a close look at them, Mr. Speaker, and make sure that they are in fact making things more feasible for theatre owners who are often having to sort of pay these multiple fees to multiple platforms.

And it's good to see the government paying some attention to this industry, Mr. Speaker, but of course we know that this government made significant changes to impact this industry with the removal of the film employment tax credit, which folks still speak about quite a bit in this industry. All the people that have left the province and how it's going to take so many years to get them back, and how we've just lost a tremendous amount of skills from this industry, Mr. Speaker. So there's a lot of rebuilding that needs to take place here, and the government should spend an equal amount or more concentration of time focused on those individuals as well, Mr. Speaker.

Many of my other colleagues, I know, still need to weigh in on this bill. But with that, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 148 for today.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 150

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

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise on Bill No. 150, *The Securities (Saskatchewan Investors Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*. As has been canvassed in this Assembly thus far, the Sask Securities Commission can designate independent dispute resolution services and set its own standards. And the commission can make these orders in the public interest.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in looking at the changes in this Act — the amendments I suppose — it's good to see that the maximum penalty has increased to match other provinces, Mr. Speaker. And some of the initial work has indicated that this bill is really aimed at harmonizing where Saskatchewan is with other jurisdictions in Canada.

But there are some questions that have been raised through the engagement and outreach that our team led by the critic is doing, Mr. Speaker. I know there have been a number of submissions from other industry associations, just identifying a couple questions around enforcement tools as well as the engagement that did take place prior to the introduction of this bill.

While we'll continue to talk to stakeholders about whether or not some of these issues that they've raised are concerns, I know this work will continue while this bill is on the order paper, as in committee, led by our very capable critic for this important piece of legislation. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I think I will wrap up my comments on Bill No. 150, and I'll move to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 152

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

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise again today to enter into debate on Bill No. 152, *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act, 2023*.

A number of changes are being sought in this legislation, Mr. Speaker: that the court can order return of money and property that was obtained as part of a coerced debt and that it can't subtract that from any dollars awarded for damages; that coerced debts can be removed from credit reports and can't be used as a reason to deny a victim from financial services such as loans; that credit reporters can't include coerced debt info in a report; and that human trafficking victims can apply for certificates, like interpersonal violence victims, to end life leases. This means that the person who authorizes the certificate can't be compelled to testify in court of hearings about any info obtained.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, these look to be positive changes. It is so important to protect victims. Human trafficking is such a real concern and there are so many different ways that it happens. And we need to make sure that we are protecting these victims, Mr. Speaker, in this case on financial fronts, as well as we know that they need protection on physical and emotional fronts as well.

One of the challenges of course is that these protections are only accessible to victims who can afford to have a lawyer to navigate the process, and those access-to-justice pieces are something that we have been quite vocal about and will continue to be vocal about. It has to be mentioned, Mr. Speaker, that these changes don't cost the government anything, and it begs the question of when the government is going to make meaningful investments

into fighting human trafficking.

So this doesn't go that far. There's a lot more work that needs to be done to prevent and circumvent human trafficking, Mr. Speaker. But I know there'll be a lot more work to do on this, and I would move to adjourn debate on this bill for today.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 153

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 153 — *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise to enter into debate on Bill No. 153, *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2023*.

Mr. Speaker, I will be brief today, but the bill of course is looking at some important amendments. Our critic for municipalities, the member from Saskatoon Nutana, is of course connecting with stakeholders across the province to review the meat of what is in this Act and discuss, you know, where the people of this province feel that this Act makes sense or where it doesn't, and we will be bringing more comments forthcoming in committee.

[15:15]

But I just want to take a moment to recognize my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana who has been doing amazing outreach across the province, getting out there into all sorts of different small towns, hamlets and all sorts of things, cities, making sure that those voices are heard, and especially doing that work around water and the wetland conservation Act and her private member's bill that we have introduced.

We have a lot of questions though in terms of what kind of oversight will there be if the boards aren't accountable to the minister, and wondering, you know . . . The Act calls that there's still a mandate for physical viewing areas for online meetings. And this is interesting because the call is to go kind of in a virtual space, so a Zoom kind of meeting, but we know the reality for many people across rural Saskatchewan that connectivity still remains a huge issue.

I remember door knocking back in 2020 in Riceton, you know, 30 minutes outside of Regina, and there is no service in this community. And so imagine, you know, trying to run a small business out of your home, running a small business on your farm. All of those things impact, you know, the well-being of Saskatchewan people. And so this continues to be a really important issue, and try to make sense as to why, you know, in small-town, rural Saskatchewan, you know, we still need to have

a physical meeting space because rural connectivity still is not what it should be.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 153.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 154

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 154 — *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the pleasure of entering into debate on Bill No. 154 today, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act* of 2023. Mr. Speaker, this bill ensures that electrical facilities don't deposit the following into the tech fund: compliance payments, debt repayment associated with compliance, and administrative penalties.

It is creating a dedicated investment fund for the first SMR [small modular reactor] and clean energy operating costs, so it's differentiating between the technical fund and this. And all money collected from electrical facilities is considered public money now. I understand that the goal is to ensure that the energy grid remains affordable as well as clean, Mr. Speaker, which I think are noble goals, and to make sure that we allow more clean energy and move toward the transition.

This is certainly something that we haven't seen this government take meaningful action on. It is certainly something that's quite important to the people of this province that we have the ability to have a meaningful transition, that we have the funds to do that, that we have the infrastructure to do that, and that we are being as smart as possible about how all of these things fit together, Mr. Speaker, while also making a difference when it comes to climate change.

We need to do a lot of work making sure that this legislation is legal. We'll be consulting with experts on this to do that work. It's something that we always have to . . . It's a question that we always have to ask, Mr. Speaker. And given this government's love of waste and mismanagement, we're not confident that they will have the ability to manage these facilities' money correctly, especially important considering it's retroactive to January 1st, 2023. And there's a question here about whether non-electric facilities may have to pay into the tech fund. It seems vague at this point so it's not clear what the logic here is in this situation.

So we'll be going through this with a fine-tooth comb, Mr. Speaker. We cannot afford to get these things wrong with the amount of money that we're talking about here and also the

importance of taking meaningful action on clean energy. It's something that is so important to the next generation and how we're setting up the future of this province. So we have to make sure that we get it right. We'll be doing that work and are continuing to do that work. But with that I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 154 for today.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader moved to adjourn the House. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House now stands adjourned till 1:30 tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:21.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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Minister of Highways

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Education

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for
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Saskatchewan Water Corporation
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