



FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

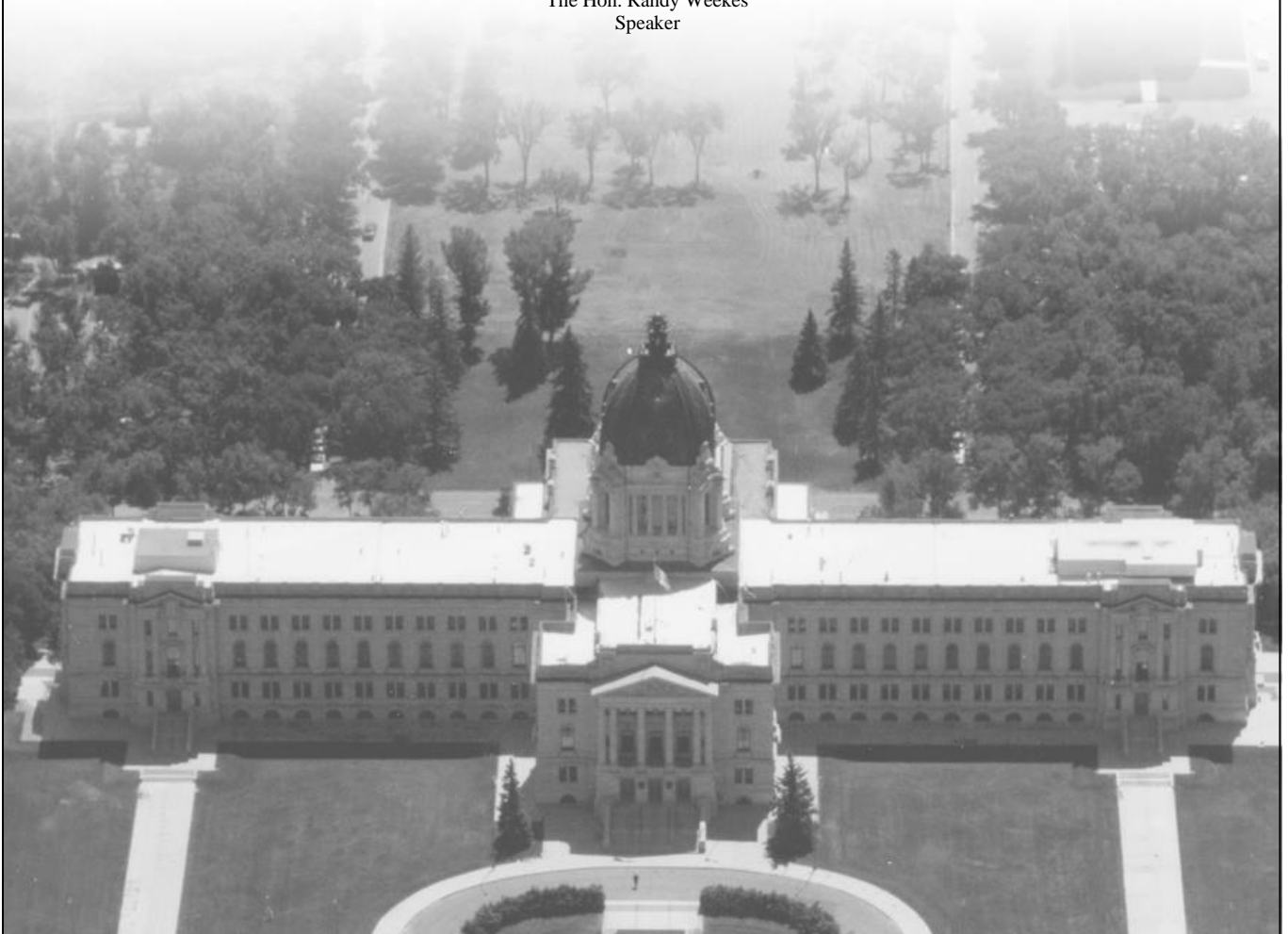
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**DEBATES  
AND  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(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)

**Francis, Ken** — Kindersley (SP)

**Friesen, Marv** — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP)

**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)

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**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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within hours after each sitting.

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce, behind me in the east gallery, 21 students from the University of Regina from the Faculty of Education along with their professor and instructor, Katherine Williams.

It's a pleasure to have them here in the legislature here today, and I look forward to meeting with them and answering their questions after our question period here today, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like to ask all members of the Assembly to welcome these guests to this, their legislature. Thank you.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to join with the Minister of Education in welcoming these fine students to this, their legislature. I hope you have a fantastic day.

I've had the privilege of meeting with a number of educators as well as education students over the past several months. And on behalf of the official opposition, we really want to thank you for the commitment that you're showing to education, for your belief in that noble profession, and your commitment to raising just — I'm biased, I have young kids — a remarkable generation of young people who are going to be growing up in this province, attending our publicly funded schools.

And so on behalf of the opposition, I hope you have a fantastic day, you learn a lot, and I look forward to meeting with you after question period.

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of this Assembly, I would like to introduce grade 4 students, 54 students from Harbour Landing School accompanied by their teachers, Kirsten Louttit and Kelly Cruse. Thank you very much for bringing these kids to their Legislative Assembly. I would like to ask all the members to welcome these kids in their Legislative Assembly. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Jensen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you this afternoon, I'd like to introduce a couple of guests sitting in your gallery. First I'd like to introduce — and you can give us a wave — Sam Bayfield. Sam is originally from Norwich in Norfolk, United Kingdom and he's a graduate of the University of Lincoln.

Sam is here in Canada visiting as part of the International Experience Canada working holiday program. And he's spending time in Saskatchewan, which we wish the weather was a bit warmer but I think he'll probably get through it. He was in Saskatoon last week, and now he's spending some time with us here in Regina.

As part of our efforts to grow the workforce in the SINP [Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program], the SINP supports IEC [International Experience Canada] visa holders working in Saskatchewan in their field of expertise to obtain permanent residency in Canada.

Joining Sam today is Nipun Taneja. And Nipun is a resident of Regina. He's originally from New Delhi, India and he received his permanent residency status last month. So to both Nipun and Sam, I would extend an invitation to all members of this Assembly to welcome them to the Saskatchewan legislature.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming both Sam and Nipun to this, their Legislative Assembly. Thank you so much for the time that you've spent in the province, as well as the relationships that you've built, and the energy and the effort that you've brought to the time that you've spent here. On behalf of the official opposition, we hope you have an enjoyable and educational experience here in question period. And thank you again for choosing to spend such an important period of your life here in Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand and introduce two practicum students that I have the pleasure of mentoring this session. We have Adrian Whitebear, who is seated in the east gallery.

Adrian is a dad. He's got three beautiful kids: Kaliya; Kalia; Adrian Jr., previously known as Baby Adrian, but he's grown up a bit. They're great kids. They all dance powwow and they're getting pretty good at it too. I understand they really cleaned up this past summer across BC [British Columbia], Alberta, Saskatchewan, and into North and South Dakota.

Adrian is a fourth-year human justice student. His other practicum was filled at the File Hills Tribal Council justice unit where he worked as a court worker. He is published by the FN University [First Nations University] for a write-up he did on the adult integration program at RT/SIS [Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services Inc.]. He has a minor in Indigenous studies and he's thinking about law school. And I have no doubt that Adrian will succeed in that goal. His sister is a counsellor out at White Bear.

And I first met Adrian years ago actually when I was out door knocking in North Central. At the time, he was a single dad. He'd come back after his kids' mother had passed away to keep them out of the system, to give them a good life, and he's certainly

done that. And it's been wonderful to watch him succeed over the years and now have him join me as a practicum student.

I also want to welcome Dagan Viala. Dagan is a fourth-year social work student. He also has a sociology degree and a minor in philosophy and political science. He's very passionate about making this province better. He lives with his partner, who I understand he recently went back with to her home country of the Philippines for the first time, and we were the happy recipients of some treats he brought back for us.

He grew up in Westhill and he went to Riffel. He's another proud member of the NOD [north of Dewdney] club of practicum students who have been joining me over the years, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to welcome these two to their Legislative Assembly.

They have been joining me in the office over the last couple of months. They've been doing incredible work with the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, and I've been really enjoying having them around. And I look forward to seeing what else they get out of this experience. So welcome, Adrian and Dagan.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present the following petition. We, the undersigned residents of Canada, wish to bring to your attention the following: survivors of the Timber Bay residential school have been denied the Indian Residential Schools Settlement that other sites received on the basis that the school was run by the province of Saskatchewan rather than operated by the federal government.

The province of Saskatchewan oversaw approximately 2,000 children attend the school in Timber Bay which operated between 1952 and 1994. Timber Bay residential school is the only residential school in Canada with an open RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] investigation surrounding historical crimes.

We, in the prayer that reads that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to recognize Timber Bay school as a provincially run residential school and release the school records of the survivors, offer the students of this school a formal apology, and compensate the survivors.

Those who signed this petition reside in La Ronge. I do so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

**Mr. Bonk:** — We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following.

Whereas the Trudeau Liberal-NDP [New Democratic Party] coalition carbon tax is one of the main causes of affordability issues and inflation in the nation of Canada; that the federal Liberal-NDP government was politically motivated in issuing a

carve-out for home heating oil; and that the Government of Saskatchewan's decision not to collect or remit the carbon tax on home heating in Saskatchewan has led to a drop in inflation.

Further, that despite the decision not to charge the carbon tax on home heating, Saskatchewan families continue to pay the tax out of pocket at the pumps, grocery stores, and more.

We in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to call upon the Government of Canada to immediately suspend the carbon tax across the nation of Canada and acknowledge its significant impact on affordability and inflation in Canada.

Below, the undersigned are residents of Regina. I do by here submit.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to recruit and retain pediatric specialists. I present this petition today with a particular family in mind who's in hospital right now and struggling because their child does not have access to the pediatric GI [gastroenterologist] that they need.

Mr. Speaker, I've heard from countless families who don't have the specialist care that they need for their kids. Imagine watching your child in pain, not being able to get diagnosis or treatment, not being able to get an urgent surgery you need, not to have the specialist available that you need for a surgery and trying to pull together a health care team that's suitable. No offer even for out-of-province care or surgery, Mr. Speaker. Imagine watching your child facing a blood transfusion because of how much blood they've lost and the health care professional saying, we don't have a specialist that can help you, Mr. Speaker.

These are often sudden and urgent issues. They require immediate attention from this government, and families are absolutely broken over this, Mr. Speaker.

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 recruit an appropriate complement of pediatric gastroenterology specialists and adjunct services, and develop a plan to address these services in specialty fields.

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

**Mr. Teed:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm on my feet to present our petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to open up vacant Sask Housing units for occupancy. Mr. Speaker, the cost of living is affecting everyone in our province, and the pressures of a lack of affordable housing are only adding to it.

So the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to our attention that, as both the Provincial Auditor

and the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association have observed, approximately 3,000 Sask Housing units are currently left vacant across Saskatchewan, including about 129 units in Prince Albert, 280 in Saskatoon, and 700 in Regina; that some of these units require renovation, but the Sask Party government has cut the maintenance and renovation budget approximately 40 per cent over the last decade and failed to invest in the housing stock; that thousands of people in Saskatchewan are unhoused. According to provincial point-in-time counts, those numbers are growing year over year.

I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to 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 undersigned residents are residents of Regina. I do so submit.

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

**Mr. Burki:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling on the government to fix the crisis in health care. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that there were 951 health care closures across rural Saskatchewan between August 2019 and July 2023. 407 of those closures were to Saskatchewan emergency rooms. For the first time an emergency room in one of the major cities shut down due to the short-staffing.

Saskatchewan has the longest waiting time for knee and hip surgery replacement. It is unacceptable for a woman going out of province for their breast cancer diagnosis care. The Saskatchewan people deserve to have adequate and accessible health care where and when they are needed.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to call upon the government to immediately address the shortage of . . . crisis in health care.

Mr. Speaker, the undersigned are residents of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. I do so present.

[13:45]

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

**Ms. Bowes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling on the Assembly to provide universal access to birth control. The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan has some of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the entire country, that's children and youth aged 12 to 20; that cost is one of the largest barriers to accessing contraceptive birth control in Saskatchewan, especially among adolescents.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen recently the national pharmacare

plan is looking to be moving forward — long-awaited — and one of those inclusions will be universal contraception. And so I know that there has not been agreement yet reached. Whether the provincial government will be subscribing and signing on to this, we want to encourage them to do so, especially as a much needed cost-of-living measure for people in our province.

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 adopt a policy making no-cost prescription contraceptives available to all Saskatchewan people.

The petition today has been signed by residents of Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention that inflation is the highest it's been in more than three decades. Half of Saskatchewan residents were already living paycheque to paycheque before transportation, housing, and food costs skyrocketed in 2022; also mortgage arrears in Saskatchewan are at their highest rates.

And while the Premier likes to harp on about income tax rates, the truth of the matter is that the Sask Party's 32 tax and fee hikes make life more expensive, all while harming struggling industries and small businesses. While other provinces have taken action, the Sask Party has ignored our calls for a gas price relief similar to what Manitoba has recently achieved.

We've been crystal clear on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. We do not support the carbon tax. The Premier needs to quit with the globe-trotting, pick up the phone, and get a deal with the feds to ensure families do not lose their rebates.

With that, I will read the prayer:

We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to meaningfully address the affordability crisis in Saskatchewan.

Signed by the residents of Saskatoon and Regina. I do so present.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

### Celebration of International Mother Language Day

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to recognize the International Mother Language Day celebrations my colleague from Fairview and I were invited to attend. We were also asked to bring greetings.

February 21st, Mr. Speaker, was proclaimed the International

Mother Language Day on November 17th, 1999 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The people of Bangladesh and their descendants all over the world take great pride in celebrating this day.

It was on this day in 1952 several protesters in Bangladesh, former East Pakistan, were killed during a peaceful protest march. The march was organized to demand Bangla, the mother language of Bangladeshi people, be recognized as one of the state languages of Pakistan.

Mr. Speaker, this year other cultural communities were invited to share in song and dance with the Bangladeshi community. The event was a great success and was attended by many. I ask all members to join me in thanking the organizers of International Mother Language Day celebrations in Saskatoon for hosting me and my colleague at this wonderful event. Miigwech, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Highway Snowplow Crews Keep Us Safe

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Winter has left what we hope will be one final roar for the season. Over the weekend our province experienced a bit of a flurry with 25 to 40 centimetres of snowfall and winds of up to 70 kilometres an hour. Saskatoon got the worst of it; I think the vast majority of it fell in my front yard. I'm not there; Sandy has a shovel.

But thanks to our dedicated highway snowplow crews, things are getting the rest of the province back to business as usual. We also want to ensure that we take our time and drive slowly when approaching a snowplow on the road. Snowplows will pull over every 10 to 15 kilometres so that drivers can pass safely. And now with the Highway Hotline app and the website, users can track the progress of snowplows as they provide snow and ice control. This allows users to plan their routes and ensure that they hit the highway at the safest possible time.

So once again, on behalf of all members of the Assembly, I want to thank the SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] highway snowplow crews who keep our roads safe, no matter the storm or the weather. As always, these workers did a great job. And I once again encourage residents to make use of the Highway Hotline app and plan a safe journey. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Nēwo-Yôtina Friendship Centre Serves Its Community

**Ms. Conway:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to recognize and applaud the valuable work being done by the Nēwo-Yôtina Friendship Centre in my constituency of Regina Elphinstone each and every day. It's tough work, Mr. Speaker, recently made tougher by the irresponsible and short-sighted decisions of this government.

The Friendship Centre offers harm reduction services that save money and lives, but the centre does so much more than that. The

Friendship Centre offers a range of programming and plays a critical role in addressing the complex needs of marginalized individuals, including those struggling with addiction, mental health, and homelessness.

They also provide housing to the most vulnerable. And I had the distinct pleasure of touring their space last week and their new multi-unit supportive housing project with my students and my assistant, Avery. The Nēwo-Yôtina Friendship Centre is helping to save lives and reduce the harm associated with substance use. Additionally, their efforts to provide safe and stable housing for the most vulnerable in our communities ensures everyone has a safe and secure place to call home.

I fully support the work of the Nēwo-Yôtina Friendship Centre and recognize the immense impact they have on the well-being of my community — their drop-in, their cultural programming, their housing, their supports, their safe consumption site, and their harm reduction services.

I'm committed to advocating for continued funding and resources for their important work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Coal and Gas Facilities Keep the Lights On During Cold Snap

**Mr. Steele:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier into the new year, North America was hit with one of the harshest cold snaps we've ever seen. Temperatures reached as low as minus 55 degrees Celsius. Boilers failed. Pipes exploded, and one of our neighbours experienced dangerously high demands on their power grid. Alberta was close to implementing a rolling blackout across the province to keep up with the demand, and our federal government in Ottawa has a plan that would require Western provinces to shut down these plants, those same plants that kept the power on for families in Saskatchewan and Alberta. The NDP has shown time after time again they would support this plan.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of this government, thank you to all our coal and our natural gas workers who are on the front lines of keeping the lights on when mother nature decides to put us to the test. Like every good neighbour with working coal and natural gas facilities would do, our workers fired up those plants and generated an extra 153 megawatts of electricity we could just share with Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, on these days like that weekend in January when our solar and wind power just can't cut it, we do what we need to do: the right thing — natural gas and coal. Thank you.

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

### Saskatchewan Welcomes Displaced Ukrainians

**Mr. Dennis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the honour to speak at the second anniversary of the Ukrainian-Russia war event that was hosted at the Legislative Building here on February 23rd. Mr. Speaker, since Russia's illegal and despicable invasion of Ukraine two years ago, we've had heart-breaking levels of destruction and loss of life.



Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has a vibrant Ukrainian community, and this war has hit close to home for many residents. Mr. Speaker, throughout the last two years we've made substantial efforts to support the safety of Ukrainians fleeing this violence. We've coordinated five flights of displaced Ukrainians and welcomed over 6,000 people. I had the privilege to attend every landing, and it was very emotional to welcome these families. We've set up dedicated helpline and newcomer services for those in need, setting up families with health cards, driver's licences, schooling, housing, jobs and much more.

Mr. Speaker, it's uplifting to see that people of Saskatchewan embracing the displaced Ukrainians in our communities. Mr. Speaker, we have 15 families settled in my hometown, Canora, and I will actually be officiating a marriage of one of the young couples this summer.

Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to support all the displaced Ukrainians who have travelled to Saskatchewan for however long they wish to stay, and we'll continue to support those who come to Saskatchewan and start a new life. Slava Ukraine.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

#### **Saskatchewan Sees Record Levels of Investment and Job Growth**

**Mr. Francis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a fact: Saskatchewan is indeed the most attractive jurisdiction for oil and gas investment in the nation. And according to a Fraser Institute 2023 survey, our province ranked third out of 17 North American jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, we also score the highest when it comes to skilled labour, developed infrastructure, and investment security. Yes, we have the fuel, the food, and the fertilizer the world market needs, Mr. Speaker, and we have the hard-working, skilled labour force required to get those products to our global customers.

Mr. Speaker, as we saw with our recent trip to COP28 [Conference of the Parties 28], our international partners recognize the value Saskatchewan brings to the world market. Our government's policies have allowed us to see record levels of investment and job growth right here at home.

That's because our government has a plan, Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite. Oh they have plenty of ideas on how to spend money but never have a plan, nor how to create or generate sustainable revenue. Our 2030 growth plan provides our economy with the framework to establish higher levels of oil production, potash extraction, and job creation. That means more revenue being created to invest in essential services, investments that create stronger communities, stronger families, and ultimately a stronger Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, thank you to all of our dedicated workers, investors, and job creators who make this province the best in Canada. Thank you.

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

#### **Pilot Program Provides Specialized Supports in Classrooms**

**Ms. Lambert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In January of this year, the Government of Saskatchewan announced school divisions will pilot a new specialized support classroom. This pilot aims to help staff in schools manage and de-escalate behavioural incidents. Classrooms will be provided with specialized supports to help students practise self-regulation skills while also addressing the impacts of disruptions in the classroom. These classrooms will have capacity for 15 students and are staffed by a minimum of one teacher and two educational assistants.

Participating school divisions have selected eight schools to pilot this program. The selected schools will have procedures in place to identify the behaviours and engage and inform parents or guardians of students who are being supported. This pilot is also expected to provide long-term solutions to evaluate targeted intervention methods and increase teacher capacity to manage complex classrooms.

This \$3.6 million investment is in addition to the 40 million that school divisions received in June 2023 to support enrolment growth and class complexity. Mr. Speaker, the government has invested 47 million toward enrolment, complexity, and the hiring of more educational assistants as well as more than 300 million in supports for learning that is included within the 2023-24 school operating funding. This government will continue to support our kids, our teachers, and our future in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Fuel Tax, Cost of Living, and Affordability Measures**

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government clearly isn't listening anymore. They've failed to provide any cost-of-living relief to struggling Saskatchewan families. Other provinces have cut the fuel tax to offer that kind of relief. The Sask Party has not. The obvious question is, Mr. Speaker, why not? Why hasn't the Premier cut the fuel tax to help struggling Saskatchewan families?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, as I've said many times, over \$2 billion in affordability measures, brought forward in each and every budget. I suspect all of those and more will be brought forward in the budget that the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Premier of this province, will be bringing forward in just the next couple of weeks, Mr. Speaker.

And I would say that those affordability measures do show results each and every day, removing 112,000 people from the tax rolls in Saskatchewan. You add to that this last year, the \$500 Saskatchewan affordability tax credit cheques, unlike virtually anywhere else in the nation, Mr. Speaker.

And we are reducing fuel taxes for Saskatchewan residents by removing the carbon tax from their home heating, Mr. Speaker.

Unanimous vote, admittedly, in this Assembly to ensure that Saskatchewan residents are paying less when they heat their homes each and every day just like the residents in Atlantic Canada.

[14:00]

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, a news flash for the Premier: everything is not okay. Saskatchewan people are struggling, but this tired and out-of-touch government isn't listening. And they aren't doing anything to help people at the pump. And while costs go up, more and more people fall further behind. Mr. Speaker, I wonder how much worse things have to get for Saskatchewan people before this government wakes up and does something, before they finally act and provide some cost-of-living relief for the people of the province. When will we see that from this government?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, when you do the comparisons, and let's look at Manitoba where these decisions have been made. In Saskatchewan a family of four starts to pay income tax . . . Mr. Speaker, a family of four in this province starts to pay income tax at a wage level of \$56,550. In Manitoba that same family of four, they start to pay provincial income tax at a salary income level, a family household income level of over \$20,000 less — \$36,000. That's when you start paying tax in Manitoba.

As a matter of fact, when you look at the utility bundle which is part of the cost of living, here in Saskatchewan, we have the second-lowest utility bundle across the nation of Canada, Mr. Speaker. It's \$500 less than in NDP British Columbia. It's \$1,300 less than in hydro Quebec. It's \$2,900 less than in New Brunswick. \$3,600 less the utility bundle is for a family in Saskatchewan than it is for a family in Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to that, there's \$2 billion in each and every budget, Mr. Speaker, removing Saskatchewan families off the tax rolls, saving them dollars on their income tax, ensuring that Saskatchewan is today and remains one of the most affordable places in Canada to live. And you'll also get a job here, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Carbon Tax and Federal Rebates

**Ms. Beck:** — Well it's a lot of bluster from the Premier, Mr. Speaker. The Premier talks about home heating. We know now that the federal government is threatening to cut the rebates that it sends to Saskatchewan people. Now first they said they'd cut it altogether, and then they said it'll just be reduced.

Mr. Speaker, it's a mess. It's a mess they've created and it's causing anxiety for people, the too many people in this province who are living paycheque to paycheque. All because this Premier and his minister didn't even bother to pick up the phone to try to get a deal, Mr. Speaker. That is not leadership. That's bluster.

Why didn't the Premier actually do his job and get a deal for the

Saskatchewan people?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd remind the members opposite, they did vote for this bill on this very floor of this Assembly. It was a unanimous vote, Mr. Speaker, to remove the carbon tax from home heating natural gas and electrical heat here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing is a federal government, Trudeau government, propped up by the federal NDP, Mr. Speaker, which is not listening to Canadians, is most certainly . . . [inaudible] . . . and increasing the inflationary costs on Canadian families, Canadian businesses, Mr. Speaker.

And with this specific decision that was made by the Trudeau-NDP governing minority, the coalition that we have in Ottawa, there's been a number of words that have been spoken about Saskatchewan's decision to mirror, to emulate essentially the same decision that the federal government make. I've heard the words "immoral," "irresponsible," "creating anarchy," and a "tinpot dictatorship," which I don't even know what that is, Mr. Speaker.

But what I would say is this: the province, this province, led by this government — supported by the opposition, in fairness, Mr. Speaker — are removing the carbon tax from natural gas and electric home heating, is the same decision, mirroring the very same decision that the federal government made, Mr. Speaker. All of those words would then apply to the federal NDP-Liberal coalition.

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

### Expenses and Itinerary for International Travel

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, let's cut through the bluster, and recap. That Premier didn't even bother to pick up the phone and try to get a deal. But, Mr. Speaker, it's simply more of the same from this tired and out-of-touch government. They're more interested in picking fights and taking flights than they are in getting a deal for Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, the government should have been negotiating a deal, but instead they were off flying to Dubai and to India. And when the SaskPower minister should have been trying to get a deal he was off to Paris — Mr. Speaker, Paris — where he charged the taxpayers of Saskatchewan \$3,500 for five days of a private Mercedes chauffeur service to pick him up from the Arc de Triomphe and Napoleon's tomb.

Does the Premier think that it's acceptable for the taxpayers of this province to pick up the tab for his minister's sightseeing tour of Paris?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, international travel by this government is about roughly a third of what it was under the last year of the NDP. And I would say it's at least, if not more, triple the effectiveness with respect to the economy here in Saskatchewan. 131 out-of-province trips they took in their last

year of governing, Mr. Speaker; 131 out-of-province trips that the NDP government took in 2007.

With respect to her earlier question about contacting the federal government, ministers, this minister in particular, Minister of Crown Investments Corporation, has talked to his federal counterpart on numerous occasions with respect to what we are going to do and why the federal government should make the decision to remove the carbon tax, not only on home heating for all Canadians but remove it on everything for everyone.

The question I have is, did the Leader of the Opposition talk to Jagmeet Singh?

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier has nicely proven the point about pointing fingers. But we received, Mr. Speaker, an FOI [freedom of information], an FOI of the receipts from the minister's tour with expenses line by line: \$3,500 for a private Mercedes chauffeur service to drive the minister around Paris and to pick him up from places like Napoleon's tomb and the Arc de Triomphe. While the minister should have been getting a deal with the feds, he was out seeing the sights, Mr. Speaker, in the City of Lights.

How does the Premier justify this kind of expenditure of public money for sightseeing by one of his ministers?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, that transportation was for the entire delegation, not just the minister, that was in attendance at the nuclear conference. Of which I might add, when we were at COP28 — one of the few out-of-province trips that this government took, relative to the 131 the members opposite took in their last year — there was a nuclear agreement by 24 countries signed where they are going to triple the number of nuclear reactors on earth. Who is best poised to provide not only the fuel but be part of the supply chain? Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So yes, we are at the nuclear conference in Paris, Mr. Speaker. We have ministers today that are at the mining conference in Toronto, Mr. Speaker, selling our province, attracting investment. And we're going to continue to do so on about a third of the costs that it took the members opposite to crash the Saskatchewan economy.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That's pretty rich coming from a government that's managed to jack power rates 114 per cent in the last six years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there was lots of work in November for this minister to be doing. But the FOI shows that he was driving around Paris in a Mercedes-Benz paid for by the Saskatchewan taxpayer, getting picked up from the Arc de Triomphe and Napoleon's tomb.

And what does the minister have to show for his efforts, Mr. Speaker? A grip-and-grin photo with Stéphane Dion, the

godfather of the carbon tax. So, Mr. Speaker, how on earth, how on earth does the Minister for SaskPower justify spending \$3,500 on a car service to play tourist when he should have been getting a deal done for Saskatchewan?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I was honoured to be able to attend the global nuclear exposition in Paris where a week later, as the Premier indicated, 22 countries from around the world at COP announced that they would triple nuclear energy over the coming decades, Mr. Speaker. And that's going to provide tremendous opportunities for Saskatchewan.

While I was at the expo, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity, yes, to meet with the ambassador from Canada to France. I was invited by the embassy to speak at an embassy event. I was invited on multiple days to speak and to attend events at the embassy as well as the expo, which was outside of the city of Paris, Mr. Speaker.

I also had to meet with representatives from France, Poland, Czechia, the Netherlands . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Czechia.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Czechia, the former Czech Republic, who are very interested in nuclear power and in fact are very interested in the same technology that we will be likely the second jurisdiction in the world to deploy in the next number of years, Mr. Speaker. Great interest in Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A reminder to that minister, a reminder to this entire tired and out-of-touch government, there is plenty of work to do here in Saskatchewan. So instead of spending \$3,500 on a Mercedes-Benz to chauffeur him around sightseeing in the City of Lights, he should have been picking up the phone, meeting with the feds, and getting a deal done for Saskatchewan.

But this tired and out-of-touch government, they're not interested in getting results, Mr. Speaker; they are only interested in the fight. So why was the minister on a sightseeing tour of Paris when he should have been doing his day job and getting a deal done for the people of Saskatchewan?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I can say that it was a very full agenda that we had in Paris. There certainly was no sightseeing that was taking place, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the federal government, again, what are the members asking for? They're asking for us to negotiate with a federal government supported by the NDP in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, by their leader and their party. They're asking us to negotiate with a party who, a senior cabinet minister had this to

say about the carve-out: “If other provinces want the carve-out, then they should elect more Liberals.” That’s the people that we’re supposed to negotiate, Mr. Speaker, supported by the NDP right across the way.

Mr. Speaker, I would say this: last fall the Leader of the Opposition indicated in the House that she had spoke to Jagmeet Singh, and then later in the rotunda we found out, well, actually it was Jagmeet’s assistant. Mr. Speaker, I would urge her to phone Jagmeet Singh and find out why he’s continuing to support this federal government.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Mr. Speaker, from the minister’s own lips we all just heard it — no sightseeing done. Minister says he was doing important work at that conference. So let’s take a look at the documents.

On November 29th, the minister was supposed to go to the nuclear conference and meet with the governments of Poland, New Brunswick, and tour the pavilions from 12:30 till 3:30. But what does the log for that expensive private car service show? At 2:30 in the afternoon, a Mercedes was picking up that minister and his entourage from the tomb of Napoleon to take them back to the conference, 30 clicks away, an hour’s drive through the City of Lights, Mr. Speaker. Something doesn’t add up.

So simple question: did the minister skip out on the conference so he could go sightseeing that afternoon? Yes or no?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely not. I didn’t skip out on the conference. I attended all the meetings that were taking place at the convention centre outside of the city of Paris, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there were other events that took place downtown in central Paris. In fact for the amount of the itinerary that we had, in order to, I guess, do what they suggest, Mr. Speaker, rely on taxis or rely on public transportation — which I believe at the time there was a wildcat strike of one of the train lines at the time — we would actually have to extend our itinerary, stay for longer days, incur more hotels. We wanted to be in Paris for the least amount of time as possible, Mr. Speaker, and I can say that I did not skip out on any of my obligations while I was there.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know what they say about explaining. So there’s a lot to see around the tomb of Napoleon. It’s true. It’s walking distance from the Louvre, the Champs Élysées, the French military museum, the Eiffel Tower — the crème de la crème of Paris. And there’s plenty to see and do, Mr. Speaker.

So simple question: what else did the minister get up to that afternoon when he was supposed to be attending a conference on nuclear energy?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

[14:15]

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would be very happy to review my calendar and to be able to provide that information. But, Mr. Speaker, I met with EDF which is the French nuclear company. I met with the ambassador from France to Canada. I attended an event at the embassy, at the ambassador’s residence. I had a follow-up meeting at the ambassador’s office on the day that we left France. I met with a number of countries and companies that I’ve already indicated, Mr. Speaker. This was, I can assure the House, a work trip.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people expect their tax dollars to be spent wisely, thoughtfully. Governments are supposed to provide the services we all count on while keeping life affordable. They don’t want to see money wasted on \$3,500 luxury chauffeurs in Paris. Mr. Speaker, people hate this stuff.

So again, does the minister think it was a justifiable use of public dollars to spend \$3,500 on a luxurious Parisian chauffeur to tour him around Paris?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we had a very full itinerary and in order to fulfill the mission that we had set out for the amount of time that we were there on the ground in Paris, we likely would have had to add more days if we were going to be relying on taxis or on public transportation.

I can say when I checked in, when we arrived at 5:30 in the morning on the 27th, Mr. Speaker, we went to an event at the embassy later that morning. The following day — I can go through my entire calendar, Mr. Speaker — we had attended an announcement by Minister Ng in the morning. We met with EDF and OPG [Ontario Power Generation]. We toured the pavilion. I met with the Czech Minister of Industry and Trade. That gets us . . . Although the time changes a little bit different on my calendar, Orlen Synthos Green Energy, which I believe is a Polish company. It was a very full itinerary.

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

### Government’s Fiscal Management

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the mismanagement of public dollars under this tired and out-of-touch government just really never ends, whether it’s, you know, just a few thousand dollars for a Mercedes chauffeur service or whether it’s \$757 million of special warrants, blowing the Sask Party’s budget right out of the water. There is no end of mismanagement under this Sask Party government.

Simple question to that Finance minister: with \$757 million in extra spending over and above what was approved in the budget, how big will the deficit be in this fiscal year?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, it's rather interesting that the member opposite seems surprised by special warrants. It's been a practice of governments for literally decades, including when the NDP were in power. Mr. Speaker, as he well knows, throughout the year there becomes pressures in many areas. Governments just don't say, "Okay, we're going to ignore those issues because it doesn't stick with our budget document." The budget is a projection of money that will be spent throughout the year, but when there is pressures, they will provide the dollars to meet those pressures.

The largest amount, of course, was dedicated to health care, which we've heard quite frankly a lot from the members opposite saying more money needs to be spent for health care. Are they saying that we should not have provided those dollars, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, no answer from the Finance minister. How big will the deficit be for this fiscal year? Will she provide us that number?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — You know, as much as sometimes it seems that that member opposite seems like he's new, he's the longest-serving opposition member and he knows that there's quarterly reports. That is calculated quarterly. It's reported public . . . quarterly.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, no answer from that minister. Of course the financial third quarter, the ink has dried. She knows the number, but no disclosure to the people of Saskatchewan. People deserve more than the arrogance and entitlement that we see opposite.

This government has so badly mismanaged our finances. They've only balanced the budget once under that Premier, Mr. Speaker, and they've wasted billions of public dollars, from the bypass to the private Mercedes chauffeur service in Paris and so many things in between, day after day from sunrise to sunset, Mr. Speaker.

It all adds up. Why won't the Finance minister just release the third quarter financial report? Open the books and stop hiding the cost of the Sask Party's mismanagement, scandal, and waste.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — The longest-serving opposition member quite frankly knows when the books are reported, and we haven't changed those practices from the practices of the NDP, Mr.

Speaker. And the books are audited each and every year by the Provincial Auditor.

But it's very interesting, you know, Mr. Speaker, that it's those members opposite that have said that we need to spend more money on education, we need to spend more money on health care, we need to spend more money on social services, we need to spend more money in each and every area within government, but they never have a plan on where that money's going to come from, Mr. Speaker.

They don't want taxes raised. They do not want to borrow money. So how do they square that round hole? I don't know, Mr. Speaker, because they have no plan. They can criticize. They can criticize, but there's never a plan of how they're going to pay for their asks.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, that Finance minister doesn't even realize that they've changed the practice, a long-standing practice, of releasing a third quarter financial report. Now that should surprise no one because this is a government that simply can't be trusted to balance the books or with our finances, Mr. Speaker.

You know, they owe some answers. They told us last year there would be a billion-dollar surplus. Then at mid-year we learned that that surplus had turned into a quarter-billion-dollar deficit. Now we see another \$757 million in expenses being tacked on top of that right at the end of the year, with no accountability. It looks like this minister's budget has gone from a billion-dollar surplus to a billion-dollar deficit. They missed the mark by \$2 billion.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister just come clean and share with Saskatchewan people the state of our finances and the amount of our deficit?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, it's rather interesting that the members opposite, knowing that we have had an unprecedented drought that affected the producers in this province . . . And we will be there to support our producers in this province each and every time, and what he's suggesting is perhaps they wouldn't.

Or else they would somehow, they magically would be able to predict when there's going to be a drought. They would magically be able to predict a war in Europe which affected our commodity prices, Mr. Speaker. They could magically predict some very unprecedented incidences that has happened, Mr. Speaker, that directly affects our budget.

But you know what they will not tell the people of the public, Mr. Speaker? They will not tell the people how they would plan to pay for everything that they're asking for. They can criticize. They ask for additional funding in so many areas. In every area in government, they want more money spent. When we do spend more money, they criticize it, Mr. Speaker. And they have absolutely no plan how they would pay for what they're

promising.

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

### Overdose Deaths and Treatment for Addictions

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, last year set another record for the highest number of overdoses ever recorded — 477 people lost to overdose in this province. Hundreds of families whose lives have been changed forever due to the preventable loss of a loved one.

This is a crisis, and yet we see no evidence-based solutions coming from this minister. When will the minister finally bring an evidence-based plan forward to save lives and ensure that we aren't breaking another record in 2024?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Mental Health and Addictions.

**Hon. Mr. T. McLeod:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've said before, every loss of life due to an overdose is a tragedy, and I extend my condolences to those family and friends of individuals who have been impacted by overdoses and drug toxicity and addictions across our province, Mr. Speaker. And that is exactly why this government has introduced a mental health and addictions action plan. We introduced it last October. The members opposite know that very well.

And that plan is focused on treatment and recovery, Mr. Speaker, so that individuals who are battling addiction not only have more addiction treatment spaces available, they have an easier path to access those addiction treatment spaces. And we will be providing a recovery-oriented system of care, Mr. Speaker, that provides the wraparound supports that individuals need so that we don't have those overdoses anymore. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

#### Enhancing Women's Health Care Services

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise and speak about today's announcement aimed at improving health care services for women in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our government is investing in several breast cancer care and screening initiatives to support substantial detection and treatment enhancements for Saskatchewan patients. These enhancements include the opening of a new breast health centre in Regina, expansion of provincial breast cancer screening eligibility, and the implementation of new breast cancer tumour localization technology.

Regina's new breast health centre will provide a co-location of services such as diagnostic imaging; consultations with specialists and surgeons; patient education, support, and navigation; as well as on-site access to post-treatment care such as therapies and rehabilitation.

Family physicians and nurse practitioners will be able to provide

a referral to the breast health centre instead of having to coordinate multiple referrals for their patients which will help reduce wait times.

The centre, which will be located at Regina Centre Crossing on Albert Street, will be operated by the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] and is expected to open its doors in the '24-25 fiscal year.

In addition to the new centre, Mr. Speaker, the province will also make changes to the breast cancer screening age eligibility from the current age of 50 and older to now include women aged 40 to 49. This expansion aligns with several other provinces that have already recently implemented or announced changes to their screening programs. The expansion of the screening program is expected to take effect January of 2025 through a phased approach to gradually reduce the age eligibility to allow opportunity to recruit the necessary resources.

Improving patient care and wait times is a priority for this government. We know that receiving earlier screening, diagnosis, and treatments ensures the best possible outcomes for patients. Our government is proud of the strides that we have taken already to improve health care services for Saskatchewan women and more details regarding the cost implications of these initiatives will be announced in the 2024-25 provincial budget.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have been meeting with and hearing directly from both Saskatchewan patients and also health care providers in the system. And I understand how critical these initiatives and efficacies are to the patients and to their providers. We are providing today's announcement in advance of the upcoming budget for the patients and family members who have been waiting for more information. Our hope is that this update will provide a reassurance as to the accessibility of health care in this province and this government's commitment to this very serious issue. And we look forward to providing more details on budget day.

In taking immediate action to reduce breast cancer diagnostic wait times, the Government of Saskatchewan announced an initiative in November of 2023 for eligible patients on an urgent wait-list to receive procedures at a medical facility in Calgary. And as of February 23rd a total of 188 patients have been referred to the clinic in Calgary and approximately 131 have already had their diagnostic procedures.

A number of other proactive initiatives in Saskatchewan are either under way or in planning to enhance care and ensure it is provided in a timely manner, including additional capacity in Saskatoon and Regina offered to long-waiting and urgent patients from Regina and southern Saskatchewan ... has provided timely access to breast diagnostic procedures for 150 patients since November.

Centralized booking for breast imaging provides seamless care and quicker access for all patients accessing breast cancer screening. Implementation of 3-D [three-dimensional] breast imaging will increase cancer detection, reduce need for additional imaging and tests, and reduce both false positive and false negative mammogram results.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the implementation of new breast

tumour localization seed technology, which will result in fewer delays and cancellations as well as less discomfort for the patients.

Work continues to train and recruit medical radiation technologists, sonographers, and radiologists with specialization in breast imaging as part of the ongoing HHR [health human resources] action plan. Most recently we announced a new provincial sonography program launching in Yorkton at the Suncrest College, which is currently doing intake for the first class of six students to start in the fall of 2024.

We're committed to ensuring that Saskatchewan residents have access to safe, high-quality, and timely care as close to home and as quickly as possible. And through the combined efforts of our doctors, our nurses, and care teams, these actions will have a substantial impact on improving breast health services, ranging from prevention through diagnostic follow-up treatment and recovery. And we'll continue to work closely with our health partners and with patients to explore and implement quality improvements that ensure the best possible care and outcomes for people in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in response to the minister's statement here today. And certainly there are so many people across the province who have been impacted by significant delays when it comes to breast cancer screening and diagnostics and surgeries, Mr. Speaker. I know we all know someone personally who's been impacted by this, and we've actually seen some of the women come to this, their legislature to advocate for care not only for themselves but for others, Mr. Speaker.

So my thoughts right now are with the families who are waiting for care. I know that there does continue to be significant wait times that exist. We've heard of women who have been told that they at this point in time still have to wait a year for a mammogram, Mr. Speaker. It's completely unacceptable to see these types of wait times.

It's encouraging to hear about the development of additional services, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly something that we need across the province to have additional services. But, Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. This problem was created under the Sask Party, and they can't be trusted to fix it, Mr. Speaker. Under the Sask Party government.

Mr. Speaker, under this government's watch, we still have five vacant radiologist positions. The problem at this point in time is not the fact that we don't have a building, Mr. Speaker, to do this work in. The problem is that we don't have the people to do this work, Mr. Speaker. We need to be actively recruiting these radiologists, making sure that we have the health care teams to provide these services.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's good to hear that there's finally expansion of services in Moose Jaw, in Saskatoon to provide the additional space to process more screenings, Mr. Speaker, but this work

should have been ongoing over the past year, over the past two years. We should not have let it get to this point, Mr. Speaker. Women should not be travelling out of province for care right now. Women should not be told that they have to wait a year, Mr. Speaker. All of this work has been needed for so long, Mr. Speaker. It's going to take a long time to catch up and we have to make sure there's immediate action in place to assist these women, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I'd ask the member to withdraw and apologize. That word, yeah, I think you know full well you can't refer to a member's honesty. Please withdraw and apologize. Please withdraw and apologize.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### 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 Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Ms. Conway:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet to speak to Bill No. 143, *The Child Care Amendment Act, 2023*. I'm the opposition critic for early learning and child care, and I did get an earlier opportunity to put some comments on the record about this bill back in December of 2023. And looking back, just reviewing some of the things I said, what struck me the most is how little has advanced in this area since that time.

And when we're talking about the timelines under the Canada-wide agreement, the timelines for expanding spaces, expanding affordable, high-quality daycare, three months is actually a lot of time. We've seen this government move at a snail's pace in pursuing the goals outlined under that Canada-wide agreement and it's very concerning.

They were very quick, they were very quick to announce \$10-a-day child care, Mr. Speaker — lightning speed. It made the front page. It had a big political splash, sure. But they unfortunately haven't done the work to expand those spaces to all. And not even just all, there are so many families and parents across this province that don't have access to a subsidized spot.

So we unfortunately saw a quick announcement for that \$10-a-day daycare, and then we haven't seen them roll up their sleeves, do the necessary work that is required to make this happen.

And I do want to say that I am peripherally aware that there is a

lot of efforts being made at the level of the civil service. I'm not questioning the commitment there and the efforts there, but what I'm questioning is the political will from the Sask Party government to get this done.

I know that the consultants, the child care consultants out there are . . . their workloads are unreasonable. They can't actually do what needs to be done given that there's so few of them and their workloads are unmanageable. I've been seeing that first-hand, Mr. Speaker. There's huge delays in transferring home daycare or private daycare situations to these licensed daycares despite, in the words of this government, those were the low-hanging fruit in terms of getting to that goal of 28,000 spots. I mean that is an ambitious goal. I know that. I know that that may not be the number of spots we eventually get to, but we have filled a fraction. We have created a fraction of those spaces, and the clock is ticking.

And so when I see that there are all these barriers and all of this delay, even in terms of getting that so-called low-hanging fruit, it does concern me a great deal, Mr. Speaker. The core issue in this area is there are not enough spaces. We still rank some of the highest in the country in terms of the amount, the volume, and the intensity of our child care desert regions. It's a fact, Mr. Speaker. That hasn't changed since we signed on to this Canada-wide agreement.

Again, nowhere near that 28,000 spaces. We know that the spaces for educating this workforce at Sask Polytech, we're not turning people into the profession quickly enough. And then we know that once people enter into the profession, despite some of the efforts that have been made to turn the sector around, we know that many of them are still leaving even with some of the incentives that this government have put in place.

And we've always been clear that those haven't been enough and they need to do that long-term work. We need to move away from reliance on grants. We need to move away from the current approach and really create a well-funded, predictable system of early learning and child care, not this piecemeal approach, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of what's in this bill, we see that there is a provision for the minister to set wages and to set enhancements. And I want to speak for a moment about where we're at with the wage grid that was promised by the previous minister of Education, the current Minister of Crown Investment Corp. We were told that that wage grid would come, I think it was a year ago. We're still waiting on that wage grid.

And so while I want to give props to the government for some of their efforts being done in the recruitment area — they are partnering with SECA [Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association] and that is wonderful to see — you can recruit all you want. If you don't address the issues with retention, it's like filling a bucket full of water when your bucket has holes. It's not going to work. So it's tantamount to putting the horse . . . the cart before the . . . Wow, I'm really struggling with those metaphors today, Mr. Speaker, but I think you catch my drift. We need to be approaching this in a systematic way.

And I challenge any members on that side to stand up and speak to this bill on child care. All those men over there that are

chirping at me from their seat, I haven't heard them enter debate on this child care bill, even though I'm sure they recognize the potential for affordable, accessible child care for particularly women to get back into the workforce. I'm sure. And you know . . . Oh Lori, they're smiling; you're not, but we're having fun, Mr. Speaker.

So again returning to this need for retention efforts, sure recruit, recruit, recruit. But if we don't create a sustainable, well-remunerated sector with good working conditions, with work that gives you meaning — what's it called? — meaningful work. Anyway, my baby woke me up at 5 a.m. this morning, Mr. Speaker, so I'm going to play the baby card. We really won't see the strides that we need to see in this sector. We still don't have a wage grid. We still don't have a workforce strategy, and we still don't have a funding model. These are three things that were promised by the Sask Party government months and months and even over a year ago, Mr. Speaker, and we still don't see those put in place at least in any public-facing way, Mr. Speaker.

The other reason why I speak about the lack of seeming political will in this area in addition to this lack of wage grid, funding model, workforce strategy, is the lack of meaningful consultation taking place with the sector. They are doing a good job of engaging with SECA. I'm sure they don't always do everything that SECA asks them to do, but they are engaging with SECA. But there are other stakeholders beyond SECA, and SECA honestly would be the first to state that, Mr. Speaker.

This sector represents families. It represents directors. Child care centres come in many different forms, the workforce. They need to be consulting across the board. And unfortunately what we've heard from members out there . . . It's not just us saying this. We've had individuals coming to this Legislative Assembly voicing their concerns.

I think of Nichole Kessel, the director of Wiggles & Giggles, who had to come here three times because she's drowning. She's not getting the supports that she needs out in rural Saskatchewan. The Co-op . . . like she can't compete with the wages, with the benefits. A new fast-food restaurant opened. That was absolutely devastating for her workforce. If we can't compete, if we can't create a workforce, wages and benefits in the workforce that can't compete with a fast-food restaurant, there is something seriously wrong, Mr. Speaker. And so far Nichole has not gotten any of the answers that she's looking for, any of the supports that she's looking for.

I think of Megan Schmidt, the director of First Years Learning Center, who has gone on the record saying that we have failed to . . . we are not meeting the goal of accessible child care for all Saskatchewan people. These are people who work in the sector who have chosen to raise their voices and advocate in a public-facing way, not because they want to be doing that — they want to be in their child care centres; they want to be doing that work that they find meaningful — but because they feel desperate about the pace that we're moving at in this area, Mr. Speaker.

I also think of Claudia Alvarez Diaz, who I've recently reached out to the Minister of Education but I haven't gotten a response. And I hope that Claudia is not required to come to her Legislative Assembly to plead her case. She runs a private home daycare. She's a permanent resident of Saskatchewan. She's been here for



three years. She wants to call Saskatchewan home. She wants to build a life here. She has a child here. She is educated as an early learning educator. And she recently started to take steps to transfer her home daycare to a licensed facility. This would mean more supports for her. This would mean more affordable rates for the families she served. And she got well into the application process and then was suddenly told and abruptly told that she didn't qualify because she doesn't meet the criteria for a resident under the very Act that we're talking about.

There's no reason why this government should be interpreting the word "resident" under this Act as a Canadian citizen. There are lots of other examples in provincial and, frankly, federal bills and legislation where "resident" has a much less strict definition. If we want to be attracting newcomers to our community, if we want to be giving them economic opportunities, if we want to give them opportunities not just to get affordable child care but hey, provide the child care, she's doing a bang-up job. And we've put another barrier in her way for no good reason.

Again, this is the low-hanging fruit. This is what the government has said is low-hanging fruit and here we see another barrier. And again I wrote to the minister about this weeks ago and I haven't heard anything. There hasn't been a change. So again I go back to, is the political will to create affordable, high-quality child care really there? So me as critic, I'm going to continue to push the government on that front.

I read through the comments of my colleagues with great interest. All of them raised excellent points. I look forward to asking more questions about this bill in committee, and at this point I am content to conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the minister that Bill No. 143 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

[14:45]

**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:** — To the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — This bill is committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

#### 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 University.

**Ms. Bowes:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to weigh in on Bill 148, *The Film Content Information Act*. This bill is a repeal and replace of *The Film and Video Classification Act, 2016*.

Major changes here are that the public now must be informed of the classification of the film, for example, if a film contains violence or other content matter that may be questionable and that people would like the discretion to be aware of before they view. Films must also provide audiences with the ability to contact the film creator for the purpose of questions and complaints that they may have. And it says here as well, the selling or renting of adult films are only allowed if the films have been reviewed and approved by an authorized entity by the laws of the province.

There is a director of film content that is to be appointed to perform duties of fulfilling and enforcing the Act or any other Act relevant, and there is the establishment of a director or other authorized entity to investigate films for the purpose of enforcing the Act without a warrant as well as with a warrant. Then there is also the establishment of penalties for non-compliance. You know, I mean it's like . . . I think on the face of it it seems reasonable, the changes that we're seeing here. I think it's good for people to be informed, to be well-informed before they view specific content. So we don't have any concerns so far on that front.

But I will say, Mr. Speaker, that you know, this tinkering around the edges is really quite unsatisfactory when you consider the overall state of the film industry in Saskatchewan, specifically as a result of this government's cutting, their axing of the film tax credit and then the subsequent hobbling of that industry in our province, which we are still seeing the effects of so many people, so many talented people picking up and moving out of Saskatchewan due to the lack of opportunities as a result of cutting that tax credit.

So you know, as I said, on the face of it these changes seem to be reasonable, but of course we'd encourage the government to take a much more serious and fulsome look at the film industry and how they can bolster that industry and undo some of the harm that they have created in past and which, you know, effects are still lingering.

So I think I'll leave it there for today. I know our critic is consulting on this bill and is talking to stakeholders to get further feedback on these changes. And for now I will adjourn debate on Bill 148, *The Film Content Information Act*.

**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 Saskatoon Fairview.

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today to enter into debate on Bill No. 150, *The Securities (Saskatchewan Investors Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*.

Any time we're talking about securities, we know this is talking about different forms of financial assets, and it sort of runs the full gamut there. And it certainly makes a ton of sense that we would protect Saskatchewan investors. I understand that there was a request to update some of this legislation and put it in line with other provinces, specifically updating the maximum administrative penalty to \$1 million from \$100,000. It certainly makes sense as well to have greater oversight and make sure that there is independence from the minister as well, Mr. Speaker. But I will also note that an oversight body should have the means to enforce.

And I think there are a lot of questions about the mechanics of this and how it's going to work that will require talking to stakeholders. We've already started to do that work and to hear some information from stakeholders. There's some concerns coming in about this creating monopolies, Mr. Speaker, so it's something we're going to have to look into and continue to consult on. And of course we know this is very important work that a government should be doing in protecting citizens, and it's not something we can take lightly, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 150 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. 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 Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be fairly brief with respect to Bill No. 152 this afternoon, *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act, 2023*. I've read through the provisions or the intent of the legislation. I've read the minister's comments. I've consulted with our critic who's leading the way for us on these fronts, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly it seems that there's some positive changes within this legislation. Mr. Speaker, it's critically important that we work to protect victims on financial fronts as well as the physical and emotional fronts, Mr. Speaker. Victims of human trafficking deserve all the support of their government, Mr. Speaker, and legislation that's as effective as it can be. Mr. Speaker, we're

talking about individuals who endure incredible abuses, Mr. Speaker, and trauma. What we need to make sure is that legislation and the tools that are brought with legislation are accessible to those victims, Mr. Speaker.

I know our critic, our Justice critic is leading the way on that consultation and will be bringing forward some of her consultation, her questions, and potential improvements to committee in due course, Mr. Speaker, and to this Assembly. I'd invite anyone that's involved and has expertise on this front, Mr. Speaker, who has knowledge or who's endured trauma and abuse on these fronts, Mr. Speaker, that would care to share perspectives, to connect with our Justice critic. I know she's leading those conversations, Mr. Speaker. It would be our aim to make sure that we have as effective of legislation as we can on this front, Mr. Speaker, to ensure the protections and the supports that victims deserve.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I would adjourn debate at this time with respect to Bill No. 152, *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) 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. 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 Saskatoon University.

**Ms. Bowes:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'll be quite brief weighing in here on Bill 153, *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2023*.

Looks like quite a hodgepodge of changes here, revisions stating and spelling out that boards of revision are accountable to municipal councillors as opposed to the minister, that those boards of revision are appointed by municipal councils, and that a council has the ability and the jurisdiction to appoint a centralized board as their board. Also laying out that council members, municipal employees, and school board employees can be on these boards of revision, but that they can't hear appeals for their own municipality. I think that makes good sense to me. That the boards are certified and coordinated by a registrar, and that those boards can set deadlines for withdrawing appeals and codes of conduct justifying expulsion of persons from meetings.

Some changes here around the organization of hamlets as well. Couple of those points being that hamlets are demoted after one year of inactivity, not two. I'm not exactly sure what that specifically involves, what level of activity hamlets have to have. Also that hamlets must have agreement with the RM [rural municipality] to be established — seems reasonable — and that the RM can ask the minister to order reversion of the

OH [organized hamlet] status; the minister can also make defunct a special service area for tax purposes; and that there's a change for the board terms from four years to three.

Quite a list here, Mr. Speaker, so I don't know that I'm going to get to them all. But one of them in particular was that municipal councils can phase in property tax changes the same way that cities do. That seems to me, on the face of it, to be quite reasonable.

And then there's a provision for council meetings to be held virtually, but that they still need to have a physical space for the public to watch. I think that makes sense. We've been moving especially since the pandemic into an era of greater access to meeting virtually. It makes meeting spaces a lot more accessible for many people, and I think is overall a positive shift.

So, Mr. Speaker, I cannot say at this moment if we are in full favour of the proposed changes. I know that our lead critic has been doing a lot of consultation on this bill in particular and that she is, you know, awaiting feedback from numerous relevant stakeholders. And so I think for now I'm going to suspend judgment at the moment. But I do know, you know, certainly the one question we do have outstanding at the moment is, interested to know who is calling for the reduction of board terms. And we're also interested in the call to, you know, still mandate physical viewing areas for online meetings.

But overall, Mr. Speaker, we're going to I think leave it there for today, and for now I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 153, *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes 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. 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 Regina Coronation Park.

**Mr. Burki:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure and honour to be entering on debate on Bill 154, the management and reduction of green gas houses amendment Act, 2023. Mr. Speaker, it's really a great opportunity for me to talk about green gas houses and reduction of gas, and it's always good that we can give environment climate to our next generation, the way we got from our forefathers. I'm really appreciating that one. And it's a good part and good plan that in 2050 we can produce zero emission from our province. For doing anything like that legislation, one of the most important things is that if we are doing any infrastructure or if we're doing any kind of management, the first opportunity as we worry about climate, we have to worry about our workforce as well.

So any jobs that we can have relating to that project, we make sure we engage our own provincial people, because we know that a lot of people are coming to Saskatchewan. And now Saskatchewan is in a place that people are coming from all over the country. Due to the housing issues in the East and West, people are coming to the middle, to Saskatchewan. And we make sure we have to retain those people. And we can retain them if we can have really good opportunities for them as well.

And for doing any kind of further amendment, it is always advisable that we have to consult people who are really expert in that area to make sure we can get their thoughts and have consultation with them. So whatever we're doing for our future, make sure we're not messing up with that.

[15:00]

With that I will say that any power generation that we have, it should be in the long term, should be without any green gases emission, and we make sure we have to be environmentally friendly.

So for that purpose, I think we have to do hard work. And with that, I will allow the critic for this relating amendment bill, I think they will have to be looking to that. And they will be looking into their side as well for further consultation with the stakeholders, and they will be the best option to debate on that one. With this, I want to adjourn debate on Bill 154, the management and reduction of green gases amendment, 2023. Thank you.

**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 member has 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 until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:01.]

# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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