



FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

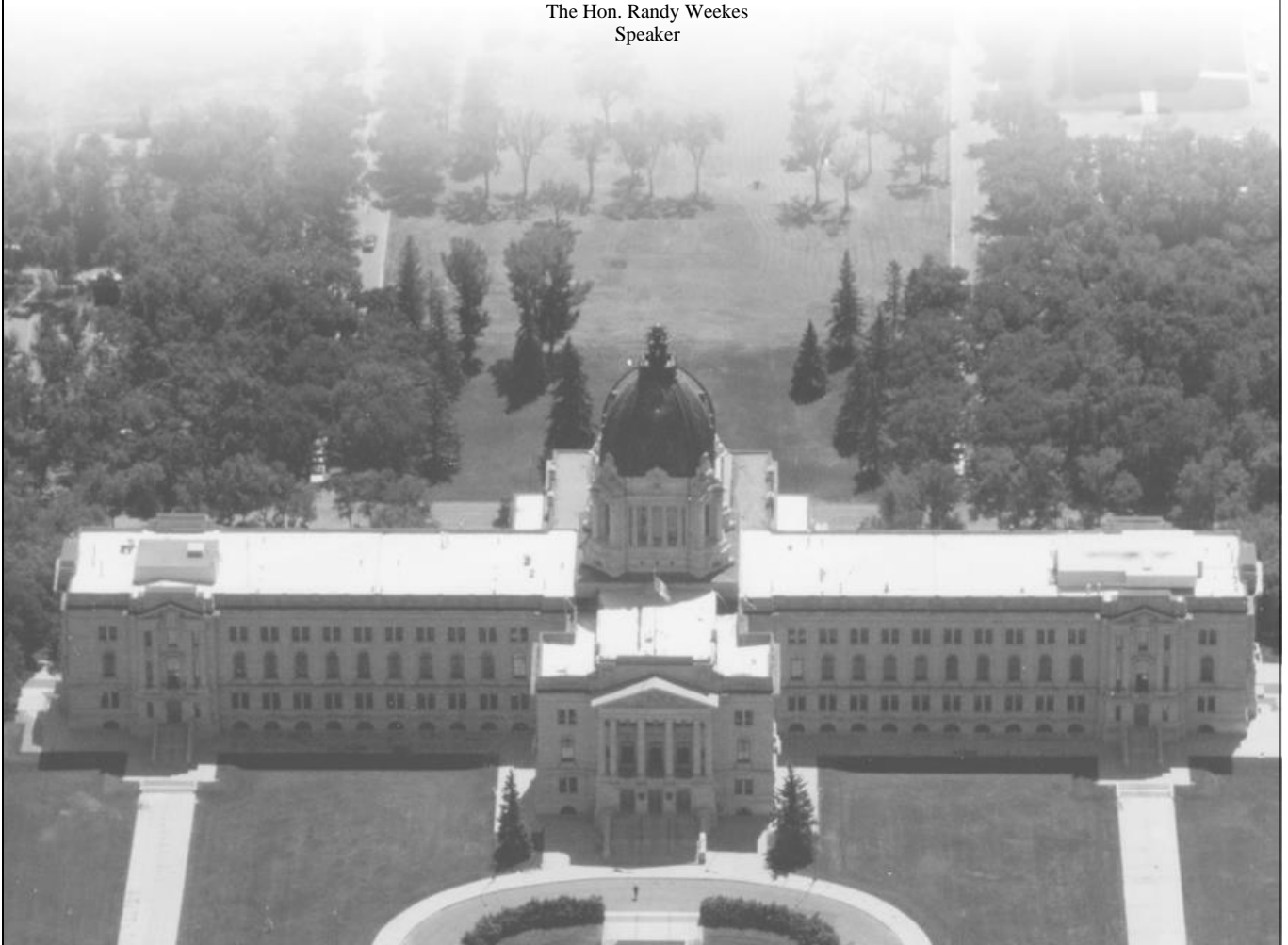
of the

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

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Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

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Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

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

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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

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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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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and all members of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to introduce three very special people in my life seated in the west gallery: daughter-in-law Laine Goertz-Kaeding, who I think is very familiar to many in this Assembly with her long career in the Ministry of Environment's office, but with her are also two very precious granddaughters.

So we have Brynn who is eight years old. She's a grade 3-er in Regina here, loves school. She loves camping and she loves horses. And she tells me that she wants to be a barrel racer and a veterinarian, Mr. Speaker. Tessa is four years old, four years old, and she's in preschool. Very shy, yes. She too loves school. She loves to have fun in gymnastics and swimming, and she loves chocolate. A girl after my own heart, Mr. Speaker.

So I'd like all members in the Legislative Assembly to welcome my family members — Brynn, Tessa, and Laine — to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to welcome some guests who are seated in the Speaker's gallery today: Joseph Amodia Jr., who goes by Buddy, from the Filipino Community Foundation of Canada — he's one of the founders; along with Knick Sarceno who is a co-founder of the foundation as well, as well as a freelancer in artistic services.

I'd like to welcome Leta Raquel-Lee. She's the president of the Filipino Events Alliance of Saskatchewan and Laarni Laput, who's from Regina, who's a direct support worker here and works in group homes. And Marianne and Glenn Tirol who are immigration consultants and joined by their family here today.

I want to thank these individuals for joining us here in their legislature today. I know for many of them it's their first time being in the building, and I'll have more to say about Buddy in a member statement a little bit later. But I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these individuals to their legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity here. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming these folks from our Filipino community in Saskatchewan, representing numerous organizations including the Filipino foundation of Canada, to their Legislative Assembly here in Regina, Saskatchewan, our capital city, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank them for the work that they do, the engagement that they have with the Government of Saskatchewan in various departments, Mr. Speaker, and quite frankly the guidance that they provide all members on this floor as we make decisions on behalf of all of the folks that live in Saskatchewan. This most certainly is what the new Saskatchewan, what Saskatchewan looks like today. Very different than maybe what it looked like 20 or 30 years ago, Mr. Speaker. And I would say it very much is for the better, Mr. Speaker.

So welcome to all of those folks, to Buddy and your delegation from the Filipino community here in Saskatchewan. We hope you enjoy the day in your Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: whereas the Trudeau Liberal-NDP [New Democratic Party] coalition carbon tax is one of the main causes of affordability issues on 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 to not collect or remit the carbon tax on home heating in Saskatchewan has led to a drop in inflation; further, that despite the decision to not charge the carbon tax on home heating, Saskatchewan families continue to pay the tax out of their pockets at the pumps, grocery stores, and many more items.

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.

The below undersigned are residents of Yorkton, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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 calling for universal access to birth control.

The federal government has announced it's working on a plan to provide contraceptives at no cost to Canadians. We know this would be a game changer for those struggling with the cost of living, and that cost is a barrier to folks who are working to access contraceptive birth control in Saskatchewan, especially among adolescents, which is particularly of note considering we have the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed today by individuals from Saskatoon and Regina. 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.

I do so present.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present our petition calling on the government to reverse the ban on third-party sex ed providers in public schools.

Banning third-party providers of sexual health education will mean fewer kids getting access to evidence-based sex education, which we need, given that Saskatchewan has the highest rates of teen pregnancies, STIs [sexually transmitted infection], and HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] transmission in the country, the highest rates of sexual assault and domestic violence in the country; and that all children have the right to comprehensive, age-appropriate sexual health education; that third-party sexual education providers are trained professionals who are best suited to teaching sex ed in the classroom; and finally, that many teachers have expressed great concern because they are not adequately trained to administer sex health education.

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 reverse its policy decision to ban third-party sex ed educators in Saskatchewan schools and to listen to the experts and stakeholders in developing comprehensive sex education curriculum for all publicly funded schools.

Mr. Speaker, the residents who have signed today reside in Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Wascana Plains.

Team Saskatchewan Earns Silver at Brier

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While Saskatchewan may not have ended its Brier cup dry spell, there was a lot of reasons for curling fans in Saskatchewan and throughout Canada to be excited at this year's Brier. Over the last couple weeks, fans have watched Team Saskatchewan's meteoric rise over the competition. Saskatchewan took home silver after a hard-fought battle with Team Canada. This was Saskatchewan's best finish in 29 years.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is incredibly proud of Mike McEwen and the Saskatchewan curling team. Fantastic shot placement from the earlier games of the tournament showed the hard work that Mike and the team had put into their training leading up to the Brier.

On behalf of the Legislative Assembly, congratulations to Mike

McEwen and the Saskatchewan curling team for a very well-played tournament. And congratulations to the winner, of course, Brad Gushue and Team Canada. Thank you to all the volunteers, workers, Brandt Centre staff, the teams, and of course the fans for another great Brier.

And curling fans will be excited to know that Moose Jaw has been selected as the host city for the World Men's Curling Championship in 2025. Thank you.

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

Observance of Ramadan

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the official opposition MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Regina Coronation Park, where we have a growing Muslim community, I'm so proud to rise to recognize the beginning of Ramadan.

During Ramadan, Muslims around the world fast from sunrise to sunset. It's to honour God, to practise self-discipline, and to reflect on the many blessings we have in our lives, such as food, water, and shelter — blessings we should have to be grateful for. Ramadan reminds us of important values like generosity, kindness, unity, and respecting others. It's a chance for all of us to come together no matter who we are and where we come from.

Mr. Speaker, I'm so honoured to represent such a strong, compassionate, and generous community. I would like to extend blessings and sincere wishes of health and happiness to all those who celebrate this holy month. I invite all members to join me in recognizing the start of Ramadan. And I also thank the Muslim community for all the hard work they do to make Saskatchewan a vibrant and welcoming place. Ramadan Mubarak. Ramadan Kareem.

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

Ituna Hosts Senior Girls' High School Curling Provincial Championship

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Curling is Saskatchewan's provincial sport, and while many people were focused on the Brier in Regina, an equally important bonspiel was also happening this weekend. The Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association senior girls' provincial championship bonspiel was held in Ituna on Friday and Saturday.

Schools competed at the local, regional, and district levels, and eight teams qualified for the provincial championships. Ituna School, along with parents, community members, and local businesses hosted a fantastic event at the local curling rink. The organizers had a professional bagpiper pipe the athletes in on a phenomenal opening ceremonies. And everyone who attended had the opportunity to sample some of Ituna's famous homemade deep-fried perogies. Even the Premier knows what I'm talking about.

Congratulations to the North Battleford composite and Moose Jaw Peacock to make it to the finals, with Moose Jaw Peacock

winning the senior girls' provincial championship. A big shout-out to teacher Kayla Onufreychuk for coaching the Ituna girls' team and spearheading the whole weekend, and to all teachers across the province for coaching, mentoring, and encouraging students to take up the great sport of curling. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatoon Resident Serves His Community at Home and Abroad

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to share with the Assembly today the hard work of Joseph Amodia Jr., who goes by Buddy.

Buddy's work in our community is dedicated to bridging the gaps of Filipino culture in Saskatchewan and providing aid to those in need. He fundraises money to purchase wheelchairs and mobility devices for back home in the Philippines, in partnership with the International Wheelchair Foundation. And it doesn't stop there. In total this work has donated to 15 different countries, Mr. Speaker.

His charitable work also provides financial aid and groceries, rice, essentials, other health care assistance, and solar lights to communities to provide electricity. Three months after being hit by a typhoon, they helped 67 households that were devastated by a natural disaster in the Philippines, Mr. Speaker.

Buddy is a co-founder of the Filipino Community Foundation of Saskatchewan, along with Knick Sarceno. This foundation has been supporting local Filipino vendors. I've had the opportunity to visit an organized marketplace that they've done in Midtown Plaza, I think three times now in Saskatoon, and see the care and energy that they have put into building community.

He's a strong supporter of our local economy in Saskatoon. He's an organizer, chef, consultant, and sales manager. And I would like everyone to please join me in welcoming Buddy to his legislature, and thank him for his work to make Saskatoon a better place to live, while continuing to support community members back in the Philippines and worldwide.

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

Canadian Women Physicians Day

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. March 11th is national Canadian Women Physicians Day.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, March 11th is also the date of licensure for Dr. Jennie Trout, the first woman licensed to practise medicine in Canada. This year, the Canadian Women in Medicine organization is asking the public to celebrate by thanking a woman physician for her work and dedication.

According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, 40 per cent of the total population of Saskatchewan physicians are

women. Additionally from 2018 to 2022 Saskatchewan saw an increase of nearly 24 per cent in female physicians overall.

Saskatchewan is proud to support women in medicine. In 2024 our government was able to sign a new agreement with the Saskatchewan Medical Association for physician compensation. Addressing gender equity in medicine, including discrepancies in rates of pay, is a priority.

The new physician services agreement with the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] includes an annual investment of \$1.5 million targeted to obstetrics and gynecology services as well as an additional \$1 million in new annual funding for future work in improving gender pay equity in the physician services payment schedule.

Our government is committed to continuing to work with the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority], the SMA, the University of Saskatchewan, and all other health sector partners to improve equity and diversity in the health care system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Saskatchewan Experiences Continued Job Growth

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Statistics Canada confirmed what this side of the House already knows — year over year, Saskatchewan's workforce keeps getting stronger.

The province added 18,700 new full-time jobs, an increase of 15,200 when compared to February of 2024. Both major cities experienced job growth of over 6 per cent. Saskatoon's employment is up 11,400 and Regina is up 8,500 jobs. Our province has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, well below the national average of 5.8 per cent.

And for the benefit of the members opposite, let's get specific, Mr. Speaker; 26 per cent more professional, scientific, and technical services jobs; business, building, and other support services jobs are up 36.6 per cent; and wholesale and retail trade jobs increased by a total of 3,400. Off-reserve and Indigenous youth employment both experienced their fifth month of consecutive year-over-year growth. And we're seeing an all-time high working-age population of 940,600 residents.

Mr. Speaker, people recognize that Saskatchewan is the best place in Canada to work, get an education, and raise a family. And this government will be here to help build strong communities, strong families, and a stronger Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Government Signs Memorandum of Understanding with School Boards for Classroom Supports

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We as a government are hearing our teachers, and we appreciate their front-line perspective. Last week we made an exciting announcement for their classrooms and the students they serve.

Mr. Speaker, our government has signed a nearly \$400 million memorandum of understanding with the Saskatchewan School

Boards Association. This agreement guarantees long-term funding to enhance educational outcomes and provide additional classroom supports across the province.

Mr. Speaker, the MOU [memorandum of understanding] provides a minimum of \$356.6 million per year for four years into classroom supports for students and their teachers, as well as additional investments into youth mental health resources and an increased investment of \$180 million into school operational funding. That marks the largest increase in Saskatchewan's history towards operational funding for school divisions, nearly 9 per cent over the previous year for a total of 2.2 billion in the 2024-25 education budget.

Mr. Speaker, this agreement provides long-term funding for classroom supports to focus on addressing issues that are important to all of us, like classroom size and complexity.

Our government continues to believe in local-level solutions involving teachers, staff, students, parents, and families to achieve healthy outcomes promoting our kids' success in life, their education, and future careers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Fuel Tax and Affordability Measures

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government clearly isn't listening to Saskatchewan people, and they aren't delivering the cost-of-living relief that Saskatchewan people need. Now this is a Premier who recently marked six years in office, and last week's job numbers, Mr. Speaker, show that he has the worst job creation record in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, people are hurting and it's time to act. Why won't the Premier cut the fuel tax and finally offer Saskatchewan people the relief that they desperately need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I said many times on the floor of this Assembly, but it needs to be, I guess, repeated at least one more time, Mr. Speaker, each and every budget there are over \$2 billion worth of affordability measures that are in place for Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, I won't pre-empt what might happen mid-next week, but I suspect that those same \$2 billion, plus possibly even more, may be in this year's budget when the Deputy Premier rises to her feet and delivers that budget on behalf of Saskatchewan residents, Mr. Speaker.

And I think we can be grateful, Mr. Speaker, in that in past budgets those savings have attributed and accumulated to the point that where a single person in this province may be making \$40,000 or, Mr. Speaker, they're paying \$973 less each and every year in tax than they did under the NDP in 2007. A family of four, Mr. Speaker — and this is important as well because the focus always is on those low-income families — a family of four making \$50,000 in this province, they actually pay \$2,499 less than they did under the NDP government. That same family of

four at 75,000 — \$2,273 less. That same family of four at \$100,000, Mr. Speaker, \$2,443 less.

We don't have skyrocketing EPT [education property tax] charges in our municipalities like we did under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, but there are a number of other affordability measures that are in place for students, for families, in particular focused on those low-income families.

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

Health Care Staffing and Provision of Care

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, still not listening, and this tired and out-of-touch government is still failing to deliver. But maybe nowhere more so, Mr. Speaker, than when it comes to health care.

Today we have joining us Lyndia Kakakaway, Mr. Speaker. She's a two-time breast cancer survivor, first diagnosed in 1986. Now three months ago her doctor found a lump and told her that she needs a breast assessment, Mr. Speaker, and a mammogram. Does the Premier think that it's acceptable for Lyndia to wait months for the important diagnostics that she currently urgently needs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — No, Mr. Speaker. And I welcome Lyndia to her Legislative Assembly. And I would just say that this is the very reason behind a number of investments that this government has made, starting with the most ambitious health human resource plan in the nation, Mr. Speaker, which is showing results: 23 per cent reduction in our surgical wait times in this province, Mr. Speaker.

That's due to that health human resource plan attracting people into this province to work and to offer services, Mr. Speaker, whether it be in cancer care, whether it be in our emergency departments, whether it be access to health care in our rural communities, or whether it be increasing the access to mental health care or addictions care in this province.

Mr. Speaker, those challenges that we are seeing, individuals in this province like Lyndia are seeing, Mr. Speaker, is why there was an announcement just in Regina last week on the Breast Health Centre to increase the screening opportunities that we have here in our capital city, but also to streamline the supports that are being offered, saving a physician from maybe making five requisitions, Mr. Speaker, to one requisition to the Breast Health Centre, Mr. Speaker. And then they would align all of the treatments from that point on.

So making it as quick, as simple, Mr. Speaker, and as streamlined from the patient's perspective. That's the goal of the Saskatchewan Health Authority, and that's why the government is investing in the Breast Health Centre right here in Regina.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, an ounce of humility might be in order here. This isn't a good-news story. Lyndia uses a cane and a walker, and going to Calgary simply isn't an option for her.

And going to Calgary or waiting for an indefinite amount of time on a wait-list isn't much of a choice to begin with.

This is basic health care, basic care that should be available to women here at home in this province. But we have a Premier who is clearly more focused on trips to Dubai or India or Paris than he is on getting this right. What does the Premier say to women in this province like Lyndia who cannot today get the care that they need here at home?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, what I would say to Lyndia and what I would say to so many other women, I would say too many other women across Saskatchewan that are currently in the process of breast cancer treatment, Mr. Speaker, waiting for one of the services that we have, is that this government is entirely committed to making those investments to ensure that our Saskatchewan Health Authority is able to offer those services.

That's why we saw the announcement on the Breast Health Centre and the cancer screening announcement that happened last week, Mr. Speaker. Not only is that an increase in resources to have that Breast Health Centre of excellence here right in Regina, Mr. Speaker, for women in the southern half of our province, but also lowering that screening age from 50 to 40 so that women are able to access that screening at an earlier age, Mr. Speaker, so that we're able to detect cancer at an earlier point in time. And we all know, Mr. Speaker, the advantages of that.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, let me say again women in this province shouldn't have to go to Calgary for care that they need here at home today. This tired and out-of-touch government should know that. And, Mr. Speaker, they should have seen this coming. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency is doing 1,000 — 1,000 — fewer scans than they were before the pandemic.

It was the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, who broke our health care system, and the people of this province have zero confidence that they're going to be able to fix it. Mr. Speaker, the cancer care for our projects that we've heard recently announced by the Sask Party will take more than a year before they're online.

My question to the Premier: what does he think that women like Lyndia should do in the meantime?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As was indicated by the Premier in a previous answer, there are steps being taken by the government. And, Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to meet with patients, with health care providers to discuss this very topic and would be more than happy to meet with Lyndia here today as well to discuss her specific case.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are working very hard to invest more resources into screening, into diagnostics, into treatment. Mr. Speaker, in addition to what the Premier detailed earlier in his answers, I can inform the House that there has been some work being done by the SHA and by the ministry to bring in more staff, Mr. Speaker. The SHA has indicated that additional surgeons

with the ability to focus on breast cancer speciality have been recruited for Regina to be starting that employment here in the next number of months, Mr. Speaker. In addition to that, there have been some short-term contracts provided to other surgeons in Regina to have them increase the number of breast cancer patients that they accept, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to build capacity in the system.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the key drivers in long waits for cancer care is the lack of radiologists in Regina. Patients can't get the care they need if there aren't radiologists to read the scans. It creates delays for scans, delays in diagnosis, and delays in treatment that save lives.

In Regina we're short five radiologists, and there's no plan from this government to hire more. How does the Sask Party expect their plan for cancer care in Regina to work without the radiologists they need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This would be a challenge that is faced in other parts of the country as well. Mr. Speaker, we are committed to ensuring that we fill those vacancies here in Regina.

As was indicated last week by the surgeon who joined us for the announcement, Dr. Sarah Miller, upon the announcement of a new Breast Health Centre for Regina, she did indicate this will definitely also help with recruitment and retention of specialists when it comes to breast cancer treatments and diagnosis in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to what I said previously about some of the additional surgeons that will be coming online, I can also indicate, Mr. Speaker, that there is more work being done to hire radiologists. It is a priority for the Sask Health Recruitment Agency and for the SHA and for all of our teams, as it is a priority for other partners, Mr. Speaker.

The Hospitals of Regina Foundation is actually — and we work very closely with the HRF [Hospitals of Regina Foundation] — is providing fellowships for breast imaging outside of this province, Mr. Speaker. They're sponsoring some candidates who will get those fellowships and then will return to cities like Regina, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, this problem with radiologists has been in the works for years, and this government should have been working for years to make this a priority.

Mr. Speaker, like so many people in Saskatchewan, Lyndia is waiting for breast cancer care, but she's also waiting for knee surgery. While this tired and out-of-touch government has privatized more and more of our health care system, wait times

have gone up and up and up. We have the longest wait times for knee surgery in Canada as a result.

Will the minister finally recognize that his government's policies are failing?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is not correct, Mr. Speaker. What is happening in this province is we are seeing a reduction in the wait times for orthopedic surgeries in Saskatchewan, for all surgeries in this province, Mr. Speaker. We announced not that long ago that surgical volumes from April 1st of last year to the end of December was the highest ever recorded in history in this province, with over 71,000 surgeries — a 9 per cent increase over the previous year, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to that, we do have some partnerships with groups for out-of-province surgeries as well as diagnostics from other parties, Mr. Speaker, which we know that the members opposite would not support that. They're opposed to those types of initiatives, Mr. Speaker. And the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that those sorts of initiatives, they lower the waiting list for everybody in this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, that's simply not the case. Saskatchewan has the longest knee and hip surgeries out of anywhere in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I wrote to the Minister of Health about this case over a week ago, about Lyndia's concerns. People shouldn't have to come to the Legislative Assembly, to this floor, to get action from their government. Lyndia doesn't want to be here. Lyndia shouldn't have to be here, Mr. Speaker. The sad reality is these announcements are empty talking points for women like Lyndia who need urgent action now, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm glad to hear the minister commit to meeting with Lyndia today, but how did the minister let it get to this point? Why did it take a crisis for him to finally act?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have made record investments into the area of surgical care as part of our health budget over the past number of years. Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget alone, \$670 million into surgical care, an increase of 144 million over the previous year, Mr. Speaker, targeting tens of thousands of more surgeries in this province so that people like Lyndia can get the surgeries that they need, Mr. Speaker. That's why we're making these very, very significant investments, Mr. Speaker.

We are seeing reductions. During the pandemic, this happened to provinces right across the country, Mr. Speaker, where surgical wait times and wait-lists ballooned for many jurisdictions — here in this province, approaching 36,000 people on that waiting list in the middle of the pandemic — that has now been reduced down to 27,000 patients.

We continue to make significant steps. We're very grateful for our health care teams, the surgical teams, and all the supporting teams that are helping us to get those surgeries done. And that work will continue, as it's a priority for us as a government to make sure that people get the surgeries that they need.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, thousands of Saskatchewan residents are waiting. They're waiting for cancer care. They're waiting for surgeries. It's ridiculous to hear this minister talk about record investments after allowing system collapse. This is not a good-news story.

Women in Regina will have to wait another year, minimum, before the Breast Cancer Centre actually opens its doors. It's cold comfort to women like Lyndia. How did it get to this point? This certainly didn't happen overnight. What exactly does the Minister of Health expect women like Lyndia to do in the meantime?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Mr. Speaker, a couple of different topics there. On the Breast Health Centre, this is something that we've been working very closely with health care teams and providers and also been hearing from patients and advocates, Mr. Speaker. And as I indicated earlier, this is something that has been advocated for by surgeons. And this is something that last week we heard they were very much strongly in support of, Mr. Speaker.

Now what we do not hear from the members opposite, the opposition, is what they would do differently and what their plan is, Mr. Speaker. What would they do when it comes to surgeries, Mr. Speaker? For example, since launching in 2010, private surgical facilities performed more than 158,000 surgeries in this province for patients across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. If the members opposite had their way, that would be 158,000 fewer surgeries in this province. Those people would all be waiting for their surgeries, Mr. Speaker, because they are completely opposed, for ideological reasons, to any sort of private surgery in this province, Mr. Speaker. And that's the fact.

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

Funding for Education and Contract Negotiations with Teachers

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, this government is certainly earning their reputation of only making commitments when their failures reach crisis level for the people of Saskatchewan. We see it in health care, and we certainly see that in education.

The minister announced last week that he'd signed a new four-year funding agreement with the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association]. This money is, apparently it's earmarked for addressing classroom size and complexity. But with this Sask Party you have to read the fine print: the funds are "subject to appropriation." That means subject to whatever the Sask Party actually puts in future budgets. This agreement isn't worth the

paper that it's written on.

Why won't the minister just bargain with teachers and get a deal on classroom size and complexity?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to my feet to answer the member's question and to talk about our historic multi-year funding agreement with the 27 school boards and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association across the province, Mr. Speaker. As I have travelled across the province from corner to corner to corner, Mr. Speaker, I've heard from locally elected school boards that they want more funding and they want predictable funding, Mr. Speaker.

Well you know what, Mr. Speaker? We delivered on both of those last week, Mr. Speaker. We announced the largest ever school operating funding increase in provincial history, Mr. Speaker, that's going to be announced in our upcoming provincial budget. But along with that, Mr. Speaker, we're also spreading out that funding over the next four years, keeping that predictable so that 27 school divisions in all these communities across the province can provide the quality education that we have here in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] has been very clear. They need real commitments before they'll go back to the table. And they're not confident that they'll get any commitments from a minister who only bargains on Twitter, on billboards, and in back rooms.

Teachers want to bargain in good faith, but that minister has made that nearly impossible with his choices. So here we are. This is the price of bad-faith bargaining by that minister. Why won't the minister commit to signing a contract with the teachers so he can be held to account?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, I will remind that member that we put forward an MOU to the STF not so many weeks ago, and they laughed it off, Mr. Speaker, threw it out the window. They didn't even want to have the discussion with government about that MOU, Mr. Speaker.

But what we have here, announced on Friday, Mr. Speaker, a historic multi-year funding agreement endorsed by all 27 school divisions across the province, Mr. Speaker — public, separate, francophone, Mr. Speaker. That is who we are going to work with to make sure that education can be delivered with local voice, Mr. Speaker, with the additional funding that the Premier indicated last week is coming in this upcoming provincial budget, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue working with those school boards, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the job interruptions that we have right now, that is solely the choice of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, solely the choice of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation leadership, Mr. Speaker. They're interrupting classes, Mr.

Speaker, interrupting extracurriculars. That's not what's good for our kids, and we need them to come back to the bargaining table.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, I'll remind this minister it's been solely the choice of his tired and out-of-touch government to spend a decade attacking local board autonomy and starving school board budgets, and even school board trustees are not happy with this deal. One said that they were not consulted at all, even called the agreement, quote, disrespectful for teachers and the bargaining process.

Will the minister do the bare minimum to show respect to teachers and will he sign his commitments into a contract?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, it's pretty interesting to listen to members on that side of the House — who, we admit, some of whom who used to be trustees in a previous life, Mr. Speaker — talk about how we should bypass the school boards in this province and sign a deal with the provincial union instead, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again what it comes down to is a multi-year funding agreement that enshrines classroom support funding as a minimum over the next four years, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is our government's commitment to teachers, to parents around this province that we are going to invest in education. We're going to be expanding investment in education this year, Mr. Speaker, and absolutely be looking at doing that in the future years.

It's time for the union leadership to come back to the bargaining table so we can get an agreement and provide predictability to children and families, Mr. Speaker.

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

Government's Job Creation Record

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today the Sask Party announced its investment attraction strategy, and like clockwork this Friday's job numbers showed that this tired and out-of-touch government needs all the help it can get when it comes to creating good-paying, full-time jobs here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the numbers don't lie. Since this Premier came to office exactly six years ago, the Sask Party has been creating jobs at a rate worse than every other province in Canada. Mr. Speaker, perhaps, perhaps that's what people were booing at the Brier yesterday.

When will the Sask Party finally accept reality, that when it comes to creating good-paying jobs their record is the worst in Canada?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, it's great news for Saskatchewan that not only do we have a growing population, which we didn't under the NDP; we have a growing economy, which we didn't under the NDP; but we have growing job numbers, Mr. Speaker.

In February of 2024 compared to February of 2023, employment increased by 15,200 or 2.6 per cent, Mr. Speaker. In February of 2024 full-time employment increased by 18,700 jobs, Mr. Speaker, or that's a 4 per cent increase when compared to February of 2023. So I would fare to differ with the member opposite.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Friday was jobs Friday, but it was also International Women's Day, Mr. Speaker. And what did we learn about job creation for women in Saskatchewan? This Premier and his tired and out-of-touch government are failing women workers even more than men. Job creation for women was 6.4 per cent over the last six years, barely 1 per cent per year — half of Alberta, 10 per cent of PEI [Prince Edward Island]. How can this tired and out-of-touch government justify this Premier's worst-in-the-nation job creation record?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, not only does this government have females in almost all the key positions within government, we also have great job numbers for job creation for female positions. In February of 2024, female employment increased by 3,500 jobs, 1.3 per cent year over year. The province achieved a new all-time high in female employment for the month of February, increasing to 278,400, Mr. Speaker.

So since 2007, female employment has increased by 17 per cent or 40,100 jobs from 2007 to 2023.

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

Overdose Deaths and Treatment for Addictions

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the coroner has released new numbers on overdose deaths — 74 lives lost due to overdose just in January and February of this year. Year after year, month after month, we keep breaking our own records. Yet this government is cutting the supports that keep people alive. Kayla DeMong, executive director of Prairie Harm's words: "There is no hope for recovery if people are dead before they get there."

Mr. Speaker, when will the minister come up with a plan that actually prevents overdoses and saves lives?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's important, I think, that we remember no illicit drugs are safe, Mr. Speaker. That is why our government is focused on getting people the treatment that they need so that they can overcome addictions and live healthy lives in recovery, and that is why our

government introduced a plan to help individuals have easy access to addictions treatment, Mr. Speaker. We are more than doubling the number of addictions treatment spaces available in this province, and we are providing recovery-oriented systems of care so that individuals can overcome addiction and live healthy lives in recovery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Government Commits Funding to Global Institute for Food Security

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I announced that the Government of Saskatchewan is committing a total of \$15 million over the next five years to support the Global Institute for Food Security. Our agriculture producers are world class, and funding announcements like the one I made today show this government's commitment to supporting research in the ag field. The GIFS [Global Institute for Food Security] facility and the people who work there are an integral part of the agriculture science hub in the province of Saskatchewan. It's no secret that our government appreciates the value in making strategic, targeted investments in agriculture research. This is why, year over year, we fund agriculture research all over the province.

Recently we released the results published from a two-year study conducted by the institute. The results show that Saskatchewan's production of five major field crops have some of the smallest carbon footprints you'll find anywhere among competing jurisdictions around the world. This footprint ranges from 67 per cent smaller for canola to as much as 130 per cent smaller for lentils. These crops and others grown by our producers have the least amount of greenhouse gas emissions or carbon dioxide equivalents among regions in the study that also grow and export these crops. That's impressive and it matters to global markets that place a premium on products they know are grown sustainably.

This is why we smashed our agri-food exports goal seven years early by exporting \$20.2 billion in agri-food products in 2023. We have actually been setting records for agri-food exports in each of the last four years, a testament to our producers and this government's focus on telling our story in markets around the world.

I want to thank Dr. Steve Webb and everyone at the Global Institute for Food Security for their hard work and dedication to proving to the world that we on this side of the House already know that our producers are the most sustainable, reliable, and produce the most high-quality products anywhere in the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for providing his statement to us in advance here as well.

On behalf of the official opposition I want to welcome the announcement. I just want to recognize those world-class producers across this province, Mr. Speaker, who take the risk and do the work and help feed the world, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to recognize as well this incredible, world-leading agricultural sector in Saskatchewan — the research in academia, the agribusiness, and the manufacturers, all of whom contribute to global food security and an incredible story and point of pride for this province, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to agriculture there is no better place than Saskatchewan and we want to recognize all those that make it such, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to recognize all the producers who play their role as environmental stewards as well, Mr. Speaker, through practice like zero-till, and also as stewards of wetland and grass and native prairie, Mr. Speaker. These are essential leaders on the ground as environmental stewards and need to be recognized as such.

I want to recognize our fertilizer industry and the potash sector, Mr. Speaker, for the important role they play in food security as well. Again, Mr. Speaker, this province can be and should be so proud of all those that contribute to agriculture in the province.

As we approach another growing season, Mr. Speaker, we do so with optimism. We do so with hope for much more moisture, Mr. Speaker, much more precipitation. But we also need to make sure we're mindful of the realities and challenges that we face, Mr. Speaker. And we'd urge the minister and the government to lean in to the important work now to make sure that we're prepared, that if that precipitation, if that moisture doesn't come together, Mr. Speaker, that we're doing all we can to mitigate and to support producers to get through what could be a protracted and challenging drought, Mr. Speaker.

But it's my pleasure to speak today to this statement and to celebrate this incredible sector here in Saskatchewan.

MESSAGE FROM HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III

The Speaker: — Please rise for His Majesty's Commonwealth Day message.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of The Commonwealth is a moment to reflect on the remarkable journey that our unique family of free and independent nations has made since 1949.

Last year, The Bahamas celebrated its fiftieth anniversary of Independence, as Grenada has this year, and Papua New Guinea will next year. Each of these milestones — and many others like them — represent the fulfilment of countless aspirations and the achievement of such remarkable potential. And the Commonwealth's growth, with new members continuing to join our family of nations, demonstrates clearly that whilst we may not all have a shared history, we have common ambitions for a better future — working together to build resilience and respond to global challenges.

The Commonwealth family is strongest when we are connected, through friendship. As I have said before, the Commonwealth is like the wiring of a house, and its people, our energy and our ideas are the current that runs through

those wires. Together and individually, we are strengthened by sharing perspectives and experiences, and by offering and borrowing the myriad ways we have each tackled the challenges of our time. This is true both at the level of nations and, indeed, at the local level.

We recognize today that our diversity is our greatest strength. The Commonwealth represents a third of humanity, from all regions of the world, with all the different experiences, knowledge, and aspirations that this brings. Wherever we live, we are united by the many challenges we face — whether it be climate change, the loss of Nature, or the social and economic changes that new technologies are bringing. Our diversity means that these challenges affect us all differently and that we experience their impacts in different ways. Their seriousness, however, is common to each one of us.

All of this means that we must work together to understand each other's perspectives, including the inequalities and injustices which still resonate to this day. We must find ways of healing, and to support each other to pursue solutions. I cannot say often enough that it is by coming together that we create the best chances to improve our world and the lives of people everywhere. Indeed, over the years countless people across the Commonwealth have been inspired to form their own Commonwealth Associations, from lawyers and accountants, to business and trade networks, and many more besides. The work they do is absolutely vital, sharing professional knowledge, experience, and expertise across the Continents for the betterment of each one of us.

The Commonwealth, above all, retains a particular focus in our young people, who make up two-thirds of the entire Commonwealth population. Whether in Kenya or Malaysia, Vanuatu or Dominica, Malta, or Canada, I never cease to be impressed by their creativity, innovative skills, and hard work, often in the most challenging circumstances. Their energy is transforming approaches to development, technology and preserving and restoring Nature and will, I hope, help to shape, and safeguard our common future.

Having recently celebrated my own seventy-fifth birthday, it warms my heart to reflect on the way the Commonwealth has been a constant throughout my own life — a precious source of strength, inspiration, and pride. In recent weeks, I have been most deeply touched by your wonderfully kind and thoughtful good wishes for my health and, in return, can only continue to serve you, to the best of my ability, throughout the Commonwealth. My belief in our shared endeavours and in the potential of our people remains as sure and strong as it has ever been. I have no doubt that we will continue to support one another across the Commonwealth as, together, we continue this vital journey.

Thank you. Be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

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 Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to be entering into debate on Bill 150, *The Securities Amendment Act*. I understand that this bill is an amendment to *The Securities Act* and giving the Saskatchewan Securities Commission that they can designate an independent resolution service.

So this independent resolution service will have the ability to set its own standards and also make orders in the public interest. They can also order a registrant to change their practices or conduct and also explain reasons for the actions that were taken. And it also gives the IDRS [independent dispute resolution service] the authority to order fees being paid, forgive debts, waive some contracts, meet insurance claims, and also compensate complainants. And the other thing that they could also do is ensure that correct information is given and also do the credit ratings.

So this IDRS, my understanding is that it's subject to confidentiality only when the SCC business . . . And they also are here given the ability to increase the penalty from 100,000 to \$1 million. So I'm pleased to see that there are going to be penalties increased here to match other provinces as they have done that in their provinces.

What I'm curious to know is the extent that consultation with the stakeholders have been done. And when you have something so broad that . . . I guess the one area that I'm curious about is what and who defines "in the public interest." Who defines that? Who has the authority to do that and what's the parameters?

What I understand this to be also is, it's decentralization from the minister's office. And it's always good when you're able to do that. It's unfortunate that the marshals bill actually is doing the opposite of . . . rather than decentralizing, it's actually gone to the minister's office. So this bill, it's good to see that a lot of this is being decentralized.

My colleagues and also the critic in the area has been reaching out to stakeholders to ask questions and also to ask for stakeholder input on this. And I think it's important that any time that bills are being presented that we go out to the community and ask, is this what people actually want or is it not.

So I don't have much else to add to this. I am sure my colleagues that haven't spoke to this bill would have more to say. And also the critic will do their job in asking the questions and engaging the stakeholders that potentially could be impacted by this change.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will adjourn . . .

The Speaker: — Just like to correct the member. You've already spoken and adjourned this bill, so you either let it go to committee or someone else needs to stand up and adjourn . . .

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — I've already spoke to this?

The Speaker: — Yes.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Oh, then I conclude my remarks.

The Speaker: — Let it go to committee?

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Okay.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 150 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 Deputy House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Mr. Speaker, to the Committee of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

[14:30]

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 Nutana.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet and enter into debate on Bill No. 152, *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act, 2023*.

I think as the name suggests, the amendments that are being proposed in this bill relate to coerced debts and how the courts can now order return of money and property obtained as part of a coerced debt and that that can't be subtracted from any form of money awarded for damages. It also goes on to allow for coerced . . . [inaudible] . . . to be removed from credit reports and can't be used as a reason to deny a victim financial services, and that credit reports can't include coerced debt information in those reports.

I mean certainly as I enter into my remarks on this particular bill, I mean it goes without saying that these are positive changes that will, in an incremental way, contribute to the protection of

individuals who are victims of human trafficking. And yet I think, as the minister alluded to in her remarks when presenting this bill, that this is a complex problem and it does require a multi-level response.

And I just ask the question as to if that is, you know, a serious remark, then why are we not seeing more in this bill than what is before us here in this debate?

I think part of the issue perhaps is a lack of understanding and awareness around the issue of human trafficking, the forms that it can take, and the measures that will help to protect vulnerable individuals, in particular, from its harms. I wanted to just sort of pull out and share with the Assembly the definition for “human trafficking” that is included in the Act that these amendments relate to. So:

“human trafficking” means a recruitment, transportation, transfer, holding, concealing, harbouring or receipt of a person by any of the following means:

(a) by the threat or use of force or other form of coercion, abduction, fraud or deception;

(b) by the repeated provision of a controlled substance;

(c) by the . . . [use] of power or the abuse of a position of vulnerability;

(d) by the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person who has control over another person;

for the purpose of exploiting that person through:

(e) sexual exploitation, which may occur in person or through electronic and digital means, including the non-consensual recording and distribution of intimate images or audio;

(f) forced labour or services, including slavery or practices similar to slavery; or

(g) the removal of a human organ or tissue;

So certainly those are all very heinous acts and despicable kinds of activities that would create serious harm on individuals and in particular can be perpetrated on our most vulnerable in society. And I want to take a moment to just speak briefly on a couple of those types of human trafficking that have been identified in the legislation and which these amendments are focused on addressing. And in particular, I want to talk about sex trafficking.

So here are a few facts. The process of sex trafficking a person is not usually how it's portrayed in movies or on social media. Victims are rarely kidnapped by a stranger. They're most often manipulated by someone they know or trust. Sex trafficking touches all Canadian communities and it is a nation-wide issue. And I can go further in saying that when I have been engaging with municipal stakeholders, you know, we know this issue is alive in rural parts of Saskatchewan, including the Speaker's own constituency. And it's an issue that needs constant vigilance and action.

Victims of sex trafficking in Canada are most often from within Canada, and while it can happen to anyone, young women are most likely to be targeted by traffickers. People can experience sex trafficking in different ways, and every situation is unique.

Not everyone who engages in the commercial sex industry is being trafficked. That is an important distinction. Sex trafficking is when someone is convincing, controlling, or manipulating another person into providing sexual services for money. People who are being trafficked have little to no control over how many clients they see and the types of sexual services they have to provide. And they often must give their earnings to the trafficker.

People who sell sex independently can choose who they engage with, what sexual services they provide, and how much money they charge. And they get to keep the money they make. So those are some important distinctions.

So let me be clear. People don't choose to be sexually trafficked. They are brought into an insidious process that breaks down a person's autonomy, self-control, and self-worth, often through a process that involves a Romeo pimp who is a trafficker who poses as a boyfriend or a love interest. And while this is common, it doesn't necessarily capture the nuances of all experience of trafficking.

So that Romeo pimp can go through a number of steps to both lure a vulnerable individual — as I say, most likely a young woman and that can be through online means — to have the vulnerable person gather information about that individual that they are seeking to exploit; look for their vulnerabilities; and see if they have a desire for love, security, belonging, money, or other basic needs that they be able to exploit.

They then move on to a grooming stage and so then, at that point, whatever the person and those targeting needs, the trafficker will deliver on them. This is called the honeymoon stage because the Romeo pimp is determined to make the intended victim fall in love with him through love bombing, which may include expensive gifts, fancy dinners, over-the-top romance, promises of a better future and a life together.

Once they've established that trust and dependence, they move on to manipulation and coercion. Now the victim is fully invested and committed to the relationship and the mind games begin. At this point the trafficker toys with their emotions and manipulates their relationship. They isolate their victim from family and friends both emotionally and/or physically. The person being targeted is not only rewarded with affection when they comply with ever-increasing demands, such as sexual acts that may make them more uncomfortable, and the trafficker may even insist that they owe them money. So here's where, you know, coerced debts will start to come in. If anything is questioned, it's often answered with threats of violence or using personal information against the victim.

So once that is secured, they move on to the exploitation phase. And by this stage a person's self-esteem and independence has been taken away from them. They may have little to no control over anything in their lives, such as who they see or talk to, when they can eat or sleep, or where they go. They are coerced to perform sexual acts with others in exchange for money, and the trafficker takes all or most of this money.

And it may be difficult for those who are being exploited to leave the situation for a number of reasons. They may have a trauma bond, for instance, which is an emotional attachment that develops from a cyclical pattern of abuse. The trafficker may be threatening violence against loved ones and/or those being exploited may not feel that they have people or a life that they can return to. And it's because of this intense manipulation, those being trafficked may not realize that they are being trafficked and may believe that they consented. And in fact individuals may push back at that suggestion.

Now I don't know if the Speaker is aware, but this is becoming an increasingly . . . a trend here in Canada where that coercion is occurring online, and it's more important than ever that individuals have the opportunity at a young age to be able to understand consent, understand what coercion and manipulation of this type looks like so they can avoid this type of abuse by perpetrators as they go about their daily lives and if they're experiencing vulnerability.

And in particular I think that it's tragic and disappointing that we've had a government that has introduced legislation and policies that take away the ability for third-party agencies to provide the kind of education that would lead to informing our most vulnerable and our young to prevent them from being harmed by trafficking of this nature.

And so when I look at this bill and what it attempts to do, there's so much more that is needed to protect people here in Saskatchewan. Certainly we welcome these measures, but what we're seeing here are regressive actions by an unserious government that is more interested than creating wedges and using sex education as a cheap way to score political points when in actual fact what it's doing is it's putting more people at risk and, in particular, women.

Now I also want to highlight some of the measures that the Canadian Council for Refugees has also identified in terms of what they believe would be a more holistic approach to human trafficking that would favour items such as prevention, as I've just alluded to, social protections, accountability, and labour mobility.

It's also rather curious that this legislation came about in the fall after one of the government's own members was charged, arrested for . . . as part of a vice operation to fight sexual exploitation, which involved human trafficking. And I listened very closely to the member's statement on the first day in the Assembly, and while I do appreciate the efforts that were made to apologize for his acts, I think that the member also missed an important opportunity to speak about this issue and talk about the harms of human trafficking and use this opportunity to advocate for our most vulnerable in society that are affected by this form of human and sex trafficking.

And so while it's welcome changes that we're seeing here in this bill, there's much more to be done. And it's shameful that it would have to take, you know, such an embarrassing and disgraceful incident for one of the members of the Sask Party government before they would bring forward these sort of low-bar measures to what is a very serious issue here in Saskatchewan.

I think I've said enough on this subject, and with that, I will conclude my remarks and move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 152.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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 Meewasin.

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet here, engaging in debate on Bill 153, *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2023*. This miscellaneous amendment Act looks to amend three Acts that we have — *The Cities Act*, municipalities Act, and northern municipalities Act. And it goes into some amendments on two different topics. First we look at changes to the board of revision, policies around boards of revision as they relate to municipal councils. We also look at changes as to how organized hamlets are appointed, how they operate.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, as I was reading through some of the comments that my colleagues have put on the record and the minister put on the record, I just appreciated the minister's opening remarks discussing the consultation work that he has done. And I think, you know, when we have municipalities that represent all the far reaches, every corner of Saskatchewan, consultation on the changes of the way that they govern are really important.

And I'd be remiss not to give a special shout-out to our municipalities critic, the member from Saskatoon Nutana, who has taken on the role of the opposition in ensuring that consultation work is done, you know, and ensuring that changes and legislation and the actions of the government are kept into account. So I want to thank her very much for the work she's done criss-crossing our province, engaging with municipalities, engaging on issues that are important to the people of this province, because there really are . . . We represent different areas of this province, 61 different areas, but those municipalities really deal with issues really, really close to home. And they are really important issues, Mr. Speaker.

As far as the board of revision, we're seeing this legislation allow councils who may not have had Acts or may have not appointed these boards of revision which look at first line of appeals processes coming to these municipalities. Some municipalities don't have a board of revision. Some might have these appeals that are old appeals that need to be cleared through.

This legislation allows the municipalities who haven't engaged a

board of revision to access a centralized board. It outlines who can be on these boards: council members, municipal employees, board members. This centralized board though, you know, if those folks are from a certain municipality on the centralized board and an issue comes from their municipality, they have to excuse themselves. But it just allows for these appeals to process through the system quicker.

Next we have some changes to the way organized hamlets operate. An organized hamlet . . . I dove into finding a definition on an “organized hamlet,” Mr. Speaker. I apologize that before this I had not dealt with an organized hamlet in my time here representing the city of Saskatoon and the area of Meewasin. Organized hamlets are appointed, are hamlets recognized and appointed by the minister. They are established by order. They have a board that represents the community members, and those boards take care of the budget functions and operational functions.

What we see here in this legislation is changes to see that, you know, as organized hamlets can be demoted, the status of an organized hamlet, now we have changed it to one year of activity versus two. You see that we have to have an agreement between our rural municipality to establish these hamlets. And it lays out some of the terms for the boards.

Mr. Speaker, I won’t keep us here long looking at these. I know, as I mentioned, that our critic will be doing important work engaging with our municipalities and the stakeholders in those, and so I look forward to hearing what she has to say as this bill moves on later this week.

Some thoughts that we just wanted to put on the record. We wanted to make sure that oversight of these boards, you know, if these boards aren’t accountable to a minister, who are they accountable to and how will that accountability be overseen? We were interested in some of the changes we have to board terms on these boards that govern these organized hamlets.

And another note that was very interesting is the options for digital council meetings in these organized hamlets, although it looks like while we’ve moved to a digital process for the council meeting, we must still maintain physical spaces where folks in the hamlet can show up and watch on the screen what those processes are going . . . We know we have a lot of work to do to continue building out connectivity in our rural areas so, you know, on one hand it’s important to see this, you know, that members of these hamlets can still go to some space to watch the proceedings — much like I’m sure the many folks watching from home right now are watching these proceedings. But it would be good to continue to look at ways of enhancing our rural connectivity so that when these opportunities come available for folks to govern maybe from a digital standpoint in these smaller communities, that folks have access to the internet connectivity they need to access and watch these proceedings.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, our critic will continue to report and work at consultation. So at this time I am pleased 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 Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Back on my feet now to jump into debate and leave some comments on the record for Bill 154, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2023*.

Again as I was reviewing for this, reviewing through so many of the good comments that my colleagues have made, the comments that the minister has made, to get a better understanding about the impacts that this bill will have for the people of Saskatchewan, you know, the long and short of this is some reforms to the way that the output-based performance system will work, commonly known as OBPS.

What we’re seeing is a system that’s moving, you know, the various compliance payments, penalties, the debts from our electrical grids, this legislation will now be directing those funds directly into a technology fund. What we’re seeing is kind of a mandatory legislative framework to see those dollars moved into this technology fund. Mr. Speaker, that will see these payments now going forward, see investment into our electricity grid and ways that we can continue to move towards the goal of zero emissions by 2050, Mr. Speaker.

This legislation also looks at increased flexibility for our Crown corporation, SaskPower, to continue to invest in clean energy. You know, I’d be remiss to be on my feet not to speak and just thank all the folks involved in that Crown corporation, the amazing work that they do to keep the lights on in our province. Mr. Speaker, you know, remarks on the record about the transition to a zero-emission grid must not . . . We must not forget that that transition must be cost affordable for the user at the end, Mr. Speaker. What we are seeing again, we see these dollars now being directed into clean energy transition.

I know that my colleagues and the critic will be diving into this in deeper detail and so, Mr. Speaker, I think I’ve put enough comments on the record as far as this bill. And so at this time I’ll move to adjourn debate on Bill 154, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment 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. I recognize the government Deputy House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this

House now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Deputy House Leader 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 till 1:30 tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:54.]

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