



FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

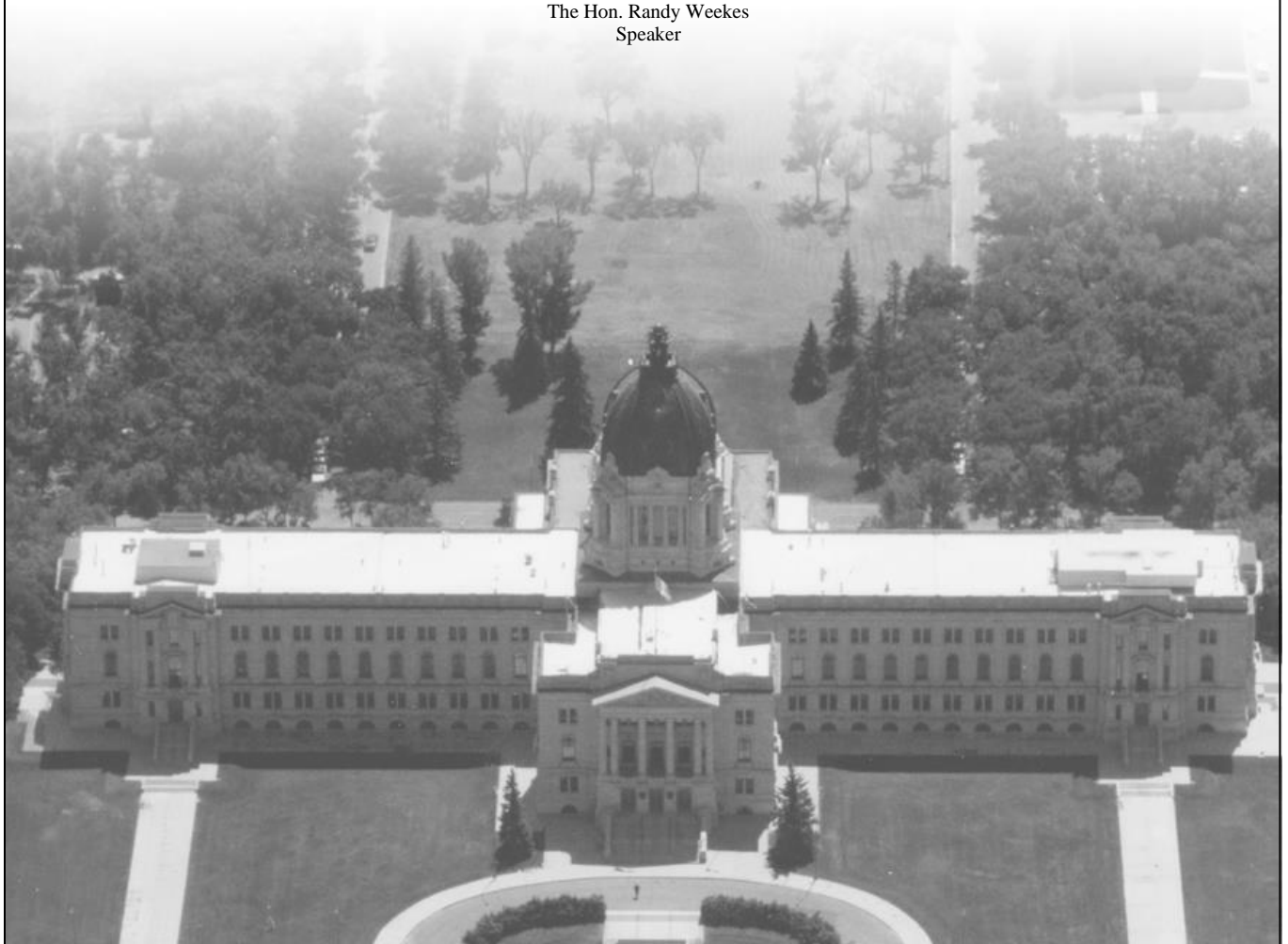
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
4th Session — 29th Legislature

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

Speaker — Hon. Randy Weekes

Premier — Hon. Scott Moe

Leader of the Opposition — Carla Beck

Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)

Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)

Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)

Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

Burki, Noor — Regina Coronation Park (NDP)

Carr, Hon. Lori — Estevan (SP)

Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)

Clarke, Jared — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP)

Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP)

Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)

Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

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

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

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

Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)

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)

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 44; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 14;

Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1; Independent — 2

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Iris Lang

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

Deputy Clerk — Kathy Burianyk

Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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Legislative Assembly are available
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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Culture and Sport.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I ask leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery are some very special guests who are here today to celebrate Rendez-vous de la Francophonie 2024.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming President Denis Simard from the Assemblée — okay, I'll get this right — l'Assemblée communautaire francophonie, or ACF [l'Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise], and then President Anne Brochu Lambert from Conseil culturel francophonie.

And also joining us is a very talented artist, Alexis Normand, who we heard play today. And for any of you who did not have the opportunity to hear her perform, she's incredible. She's won incredible awards. She's had a documentary done on her and her family. She is absolutely amazing. And if you ever have an opportunity to hear her, do not miss out.

Also joining us today is Charles-Henri Warren, executive director of Saskatchewan's francophonie affairs branch alongside members with the francophonie community.

In today's increasingly interconnected world, being bilingual is more than just a skill, it's a strategic advantage. And both of these organizations are great partners to govern in delivering French language services to our province. The ACF is one of our province's oldest community organizations. The ACF is celebrating a 112-year anniversary this year, and the CCF [Conseil culturel fransaskois] celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Best wishes to these both organizations, the whole francophonie community, for a great month ahead.

Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I ask that all members join me in welcoming members of Saskatchewan's francophonie community to their Legislative Assembly today. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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 as provincial critic for francophone issues and join the

minister opposite in welcoming this delegation to their Legislative Assembly.

C'est un plaisir absolu d'avoir ces dirigeants de la communauté francophone, monsieur le Président, se joignent à nous. Je voudrais remercier en particulier le président de l'ACF, Denis Simard, et la présidente du conseil d'administration du Conseil culturel fransaskois, Anne Brochu Lambert.

Nous venons d'entendre deux pièces absolument beaux de Alexis Normand. Je disais que la deuxième en particulier, ça m'a touché beaucoup. J'ai une belle-sœur francophonie avec deux petits ici à Régina. J'ai vu ses luttes, ses efforts pour préserver la langue et la culture francophonie, et aussi la joie et la richesse de faire cela, monsieur le Président.

Alors je tiens à vous féliciter pour le travail incroyable que vous faites chaque jour pour les résidents de Saskatchewan. J'aurai plus à dire à ce sujet dans les moments, mais je tiens à vous accueillir chaleureusement à l'Assemblée législative.

[Translation: It is an absolute pleasure to have these leaders from the francophone community, Mr. Speaker, join us. I would like to thank in particular the president of the ACF, Denis Simard, and the president of the board of directors of the Fransaskois cultural council, Anne Brochu Lambert.

We have just heard two absolutely beautiful pieces from Alexis Normand. I was saying that the second in particular touched me a lot. I have a francophone sister-in-law with two little ones here in Regina. I have seen her struggles, her efforts to preserve the francophone language and culture, and also the joy and richness of doing so, Mr. Speaker.

Therefore I want to congratulate you for the incredible work that you do every day for the residents of Saskatchewan. I will have more to say on this subject in a moment, but I would like to welcome you warmly to the Legislative Assembly.]

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seated in the east gallery are two ladies and, to you and through you, I'd like to introduce Kate Kirychuk from Candle Lake. She's a good friend. We've travelled around the world together. And my sister Pamela, Pamela Helbig-Sukut. These ladies have travelled four and five hours to get here.

Both our families were born in the first Red Cross hospital in the British Empire in Paddockwood, and our connection and our roots go very deep. So I would like everyone, and I invite everyone, to join me in saying welcome to your Legislative Assembly, and we're very pleased that you are here today. Thank you.

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

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to welcome one of our community leaders and a great friend from the Southwest, Ms. Michelle McKenzie. She's the mayor of Maple Creek. I'd like to welcome her to her Legislative

Assembly. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to also welcome the Lloydminster mayor, Gerald Aalbers, who has joined us here today. Gerald has been the mayor of Lloydminster now for eight years, a city of about 34,000 residents.

And like myself, Gerald has the special and unique task of navigating concerns and challenges of the city's residents who happen to live in both the province of Alberta and Saskatchewan. But I also know that Gerald puts a lot of effort into ensuring that he captures every opportunity to recognize the amazing and supportive industries, businesses, and people of Lloydminster. So please join me in welcoming Mayor Aalbers to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with members opposite in welcoming these guests, the mayors of Lloydminster and Maple Creek, to this their Legislative Assembly.

As was mentioned by the member from Lloydminster, it's, I'm sure, a very busy job to be mayor of a border city with challenges that mayors across the province . . . may be unique to that community. But Mayor Aalbers is always willing to show his pride in his community and be willing to show people around, and I think that that is something that we've been very, very grateful.

I want to say how nice it was to meet you, Mayor McKenzie, down earlier today, the beautiful community of Maple Creek, the historic community of Maple Creek. And welcome both of you to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, in the west gallery I have Mark Maga. He's the councillor from the RM [rural municipality] of Livingston. We met this morning with the Highways minister, and he's here for the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention. And he tells me this is his first time in this building, so I would ask everybody to join me in welcoming him to his first meeting in here.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it is a pleasure to welcome 59 students from George Lee School in Regina Walsh Acres. It's so good to have you here to watch proceedings today. I also want to welcome the three incredible teachers that have brought these grade 8 students here: Blake Scherle, Janet Milum, and of course Natalie Schapansky. I have had the privilege also, Mr. Speaker, of teaching Ms. Schapansky's two children, Nate and Bella, when I was teaching at Lakeview School, so a great connection there.

But I do want to thank these teachers for all that they do in our education system. It truly matters. You make a difference in students' lives every day, and we are very thankful for that. So I look forward to meeting you all after question period. So pay attention — can you tell I'm a former teacher? — and I look forward to answering any and all of your questions after question period. With that, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to welcome these folks from George Lee School.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members, I want to deeply embarrass one young student in particular from George Lee Elementary School, and that is Ella Shire who is seated up there looking slightly flustered. I worked with Ella's mom, Dawn, in a past life, who I should also recognize as one of the hardest working professionals I've ever had the pleasure of working with here in the city of Regina and is just a wonderful person in her own right.

But Ella, up there in the gallery, is deeply interested in politics. She's a natural leader. She's always there to lend a helping hand. She's a member of her SRC [student representative council]. She's involved with competitive dance, and really does her best to really model that servant heart and being inclusive in her classroom each and every day. So, Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to stand up and welcome Ella to this, her legislature. And I'd like to ask all members to join me in giving her a special shout-out in particular.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the government to address the affordability crisis. We are living through a generational affordability crisis, and this government's response is to act like everything is okay even though people are struggling. They're struggling with the cost of their food. They're struggling with the cost of rent and housing, and they're struggling with the hiked utility rates that this government has placed on them.

Mr. Speaker, inflation is the highest it's been in more than three decades. Half of Saskatchewan residents were living paycheque to paycheque before food costs skyrocketed in 2022. And we know that the Sask Party government's new 32 tax and fee hikes have increasingly damaged folks who are just trying to get by. While other provinces have acted, this government has ignored our calls for a gas price relief plan.

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 meaningfully address the affordability crisis in Saskatchewan.

This is signed by individuals from Saskatoon today, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: whereas the Trudeau Liberal-NDP [New Democratic Party] coalition carbon tax is one of the main causes of affordability issues and inflation in the nation of Canada; that the federal Liberal-NDP government was politically motivated in the issuing of 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 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 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.

We, the undersigned residents of Yorkton. I so do present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling on the government to address the housing crisis in Saskatchewan through affordable homes and tenant protections.

From one corner to the other, the cost-of-living crisis is the number one issue facing Saskatchewan residents. On almost every doorstep I hear those concerns: rising utility rates, rising gas prices, and rising grocery prices. On top of that, folks coming into my office are seeing access to affordable housing dwindle or become almost non-existent.

The fact is that rent is skyrocketing in Saskatchewan, adding further pressure on monthly budgets during this generational cost-of-living crisis. In Regina and Saskatoon, renters saw increases as high as 13 per cent since December 2022. Rising costs are affecting folks living on SIS [Saskatchewan income support] and SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] programs more than ever before, with many folks coming into my office seeing rent make upwards of 40 to 50 per cent of their budgets.

Mr. Speaker, this is a crisis. And the undersigned are calling on the government for action. 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 implement a comprehensible, affordable housing strategy aimed at helping individuals and families and securing stable and affordable housing. We also urge the government to enforce rental protections for tenants and allocate resources towards development of second-stage housing and shelter.

The undersigned residents reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

[13:45]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Export Numbers in Saskatchewan Economy

Ms. A. Young: — Another day, Mr. Speaker, another lesson in Sask Party math. Last week I heard a member of the Sask Party government stand up and say, and I quote, "That's why you are going to find us in international markets so that we can have announcements like we had this morning of record exports to the country of India."

Well, Mr. Speaker, every once in a while even a blind squirrel finds a nut, but unfortunately it's incumbent on me to set the record straight about what the stats actually say about the state of exports from Saskatchewan's economy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, for an economy to grow, you want exports to go up. But in 2023 merchandise exports didn't go up; in fact they went down 6.4 per cent. And, Mr. Speaker, it gets worse. International merchandise exports have now fallen year over year for nine consecutive months. And worse still, merchandise exports in January 2024 are 24 per cent lower than they were in 2023.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party likes to talk about what it takes to export products from Saskatchewan and grow our economy. But what would they know about that? The sad truth is that under the Sask Party, Scott Moe and this government has the second-worst economic record of growth in Canada and the worst job creation record.

But maybe, Mr. Speaker, when you're the Sask Party, 1 is 10, 10 is 1, and last is reversed if you're doing . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Construction of a Pea Protein Production Plant in Yorkton

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with the Assembly the exciting news of the upcoming construction of a pea protein production plant in our community. This significant investment by the Louis Dreyfus Company marks a pivotal moment for Yorkton, Saskatchewan, and indeed all of Canada. The decision to establish this state-of-the-art facility in Yorkton underscores our region's growing reputation as a hub for agriculture innovation and economic development and is a significant milestone for our community.

Pea protein is rapidly gaining recognition as a sustainable and nutritious alternative in the global food industry, and our community is poised to be at the forefront of this burgeoning market. This investment not only brings job opportunities for our skilled workforce, but also reinforces our commitment to environmentally sustainable diversification in agriculture. The establishment of a pea protein production plant aligns with our government's vision for a prosperous and resilient future, one

where innovation and sustainability go hand in hand.

I commend the Louis Dreyfus Company for their confidence in our community and for choosing Yorkton as the site for this groundbreaking project. Their investment will not only boost our local economy, but also contribute to Canada's position as a leader in sustainable agriculture on the world stage.

As the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Yorkton, I am proud to witness this momentous occasion and look forward to the positive impact it will have on our community and our province for generations to come.

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

Rendez-vous de la Francophonie 2024

Ms. Conway: — Monsieur le Président, c'est avec un grand enthousiasme que je célèbre avec vous le Rendez-vous de la Francophonie en Saskatchewan. Cet événement annuel est une occasion précieuse de célébrer notre culture, notre langue, et notre communauté dynamique.

Je tiens également à souligner le travail exceptionnel de l'Association communautaire fransaskoise pour son engagement envers notre communauté. Leur dévouement à promouvoir la langue française et à soutenir les besoins des francophones en Saskatchewan est véritablement remarquable.

Cette année revêt une signification particulière, alors que nous célébrons le 50^{ème} anniversaire du Conseil culturel fransaskois. Cet organisme joue un rôle crucial dans la préservation et la promotion de notre patrimoine culturel, et je suis fière de leur contributions à notre société.

La communauté fransaskoise reconnaît et comprend l'importance des arts et de la culture dans l'expression de notre identité, même dans le domaine politique. Nous savons que la culture est un vecteur puissant de changement et de compréhension mutuelle, et nous nous engageons à continuer à soutenir et à promouvoir ces valeurs fondamentales.

Ensemble, continuons à célébrer notre francophonie et à faire progresser notre communauté vers un avenir encore plus brillant.

Vive la francophonie en Saskatchewan.

[Translation: Mr. Speaker, it is with great enthusiasm that I celebrate with you the Rendez-vous de la Francophonie in Saskatchewan. This annual event is a valued occasion to celebrate our culture, our language, and our dynamic community.

I also want to equally highlight the exceptional work of the Fransaskois Community Association for its engagement towards our community. Their dedication to promoting the French language and supporting the needs of francophones in Saskatchewan is truly remarkable.

This year is of particular significance as we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Fransaskois cultural council. This organization plays a crucial role in the preservation and the promotion of our cultural heritage, and I am proud of their

contributions to our society.

The Fransaskois community recognizes and understands the importance of the arts and of culture in the expression of our identity, even in the political domain. We know that culture is a powerful element of change and mutual understanding, and we commit ourselves to continuing to support and promote these fundamental values.

Together, let's continue to celebrate our francophonie and evolve our community towards an even brighter future.

Long live the francophonie in Saskatchewan.]

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

Saskatchewan Launches Investment Attraction Strategy

Mr. Nerlien: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has what the world needs. Yesterday the Minister of Trade and Export Development was joined in Saskatoon by local business leaders to officially launch the Saskatchewan investment attraction strategy. The strategy outlines the many advantages of doing business in Saskatchewan and includes several new investment incentives.

Here's what just a few of the attendees had to say. Karina Gistelinck, BHP potash asset president, said:

This is what gave us the confidence to make BHP's single largest investment in the company's history with the approval of Jansen Stage 1, and then to double down less than two years later on that investment.

Lisa Baiton, CEO [chief executive officer] of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, said, "Thank you for your efforts to strengthen competitiveness by designing a strategy aimed at attracting oil and gas investment." Prabha Ramaswamy, CEO of Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, added, "This investment strategy will serve as a catalyst to stimulate investments from within the province and to attract businesses from outside the province to boost economic growth here at home."

These comments could not be further from the incessant negativity of the members opposite whose constant attempts to run down the success of Saskatchewan's economy are heard loud and clear. Our government will continue to support our economy and promote Saskatchewan to the world.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Spaces in Group Homes Will Help Children and Youth Experiencing Challenges

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Children and youth today are experiencing pressures and influences unlike anything we have seen before. As a result, we see children and youth who face mental health and addiction challenges, sometimes beyond what their families or extended families can manage.

This past December our government issued an RFP [request for

proposal] to find prospective organizations to develop and operate two new group homes in Saskatchewan for children and youth experiencing challenges with mental health and/or addictions. These new homes will be located in Prince Albert and Regina and will provide five spaces for children and youth with chronic mental health or addiction challenges. They will provide a safe, homelike environment with access to 24-hour mental health and addictions support, meanwhile allowing children and youth to stay in their own community. With more children and youth requiring specialized resources to meet their individual needs, these new group home spaces will provide the safety, security, and quality care to guide them towards a path of wellness, stability, and a brighter future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking these organizations for supporting and partnering with our government on this initiative. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota.

Rendez-vous de la Francophonie 2024

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Monsieur le Président, le mois de mars a été affirmé Rendez-vous de la Francophonie.

[Translation: Mr. Speaker, the month of March has been declared Rendez-vous de la Francophonie.]

This is the 26th annual Rendez-vous in Saskatchewan, part of a national celebration of French language and francophone culture which help make Canada and Saskatchewan what it is. This coincides with the International Day of La Francophonie on March 20th.

Le thème de la célébration cette année est “Lancement à la découverte.” En Saskatchewan les communautés à travers notre province se préparent pour un mois plein d’exploration, innovation, et amusement.

[Translation: The theme of this year’s celebration is “Launch into Discovery.” In Saskatchewan, communities across our province are preparing for a month full of exploration, innovation, and excitement.]

From vibrant local concerts, Mr. Speaker, showcasing francophone artists, to events such as flag-raising ceremonies, winter carnivals, and curling matches, there is something for everyone this month. Rendez-vous is an opportunity not just to acknowledge but to celebrate the rich contributions of francophone culture that help to define our provincial and national identities.

Pour apprendre de plus, rendez visite à rvf.ca. Monsieur le Président, je voudrais féliciter les participants de Rendez-vous de la Francophonie et leurs souhaiter un mois formidable.

[Translation: To learn more, visit rvf.ca. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the participants of Rendez-vous de la Francophonie and wish them a wonderful month.]

We would like to encourage people across Saskatchewan to learn more about the unique and deep cultural legacy of our

francophone community. And they can learn more at rvf.ca. Thank you.

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

Opposition Position on Carbon Tax

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the member for Saskatoon Nutana claimed, and I quote, “We’ve been crystal clear on this side of the House.” But she may have had a lapse in memory when she continued, and I quote, “that we do not support the carbon tax.” Mr. Speaker, every member of this Assembly knows that member’s position on the carbon tax. How do we know? She said the need for a carbon tax is, and I quote, “not up for debate any longer.”

The same member went on Instagram and said, and I quote, “We do not think of the carbon tax as a tax. This is a price on pollution and a necessary one.” She said in an interview with CKOM, and I quote:

We know it’s time for ambitious climate action using all of the tools at our disposal including the most cost-effective regulatory and market-based approaches such as placing a price on carbon.

And, Mr. Speaker, that same member wrote a letter to the Minister of SaskEnergy calling on the government to hide the federal carbon tax on SaskPower and SaskEnergy bills just to keep Saskatchewan families in the dark about how much they’re paying.

While the NDP tries to rewrite history, let me remind them that it’s their support is the only reason Justin Trudeau is still the Prime Minister. They need to give Jagmeet a call. Yesterday Jagmeet said he loved the NDP in Saskatchewan, so I’m sure he’ll take their call today. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Fuel Tax and Affordability Measures

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are falling further and further behind in the face of the ever-rising cost of living. And this tired and out-of-touch government is offering nothing when it comes to relief — nothing but higher taxes, higher fees, and higher power bills. That’s the Sask Party record, Mr. Speaker; that’s their record.

Why won’t the Premier finally offer Saskatchewan people some relief? And why won’t he deliver a fuel tax cut for the people of Saskatchewan today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I don’t think it’s going to come as any surprise that this side of the House fares to differ with the opinion of that side of the House on whether or not we’re doing nothing. The province that she is now . . . The envy for them is they have a Manitoba envy because Manitoba did choose to forgo their fuel

tax for six months, Mr. Speaker.

But let me just take a look at Saskatchewan compared to Manitoba. In Saskatchewan you can earn \$20,000 more — \$20,000 more — before you pay income tax than in Manitoba. I think I'm going to pick the affordability measures of being able to earn more money with no income tax in Saskatchewan.

Let's just talk about what they have, what we have for children, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan we have a \$150 active families benefit for every child in that family. In Manitoba that's only \$54, Mr. Speaker. I think I'll take the tax cut that we offer here in Saskatchewan. In Manitoba they do not have a children's drug plan; in Saskatchewan we do, implemented by this government. I think I would take that in Saskatchewan over Manitoba.

In Manitoba their PST [provincial sales tax] is 7 per cent; in Saskatchewan it's 6 per cent. I think I'll take the affordability measures that this government's brought in in Saskatchewan any day of the week over the way they tax in Manitoba.

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

Funding Agreement with School Boards

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, another day, another demonstration that this tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government isn't listening to the people of this province. They think that they know best. A bad case of unearned confidence. And that's certainly the case when it comes to education.

In today's *Leader-Post*, a school board trustee says that the Sask Party gave boards a take-it-or-leave-it offer with only 24 hours to accept the deal. Mr. Speaker, that is not leadership. That is bullying.

Why is this government bullying school divisions instead of negotiating a fair deal with teachers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, are we actually standing on the floor of this House debating some anonymous person who made a comment to the *Leader-Post*? Mr. Speaker, let's get serious. And I'll tell you something: I've been around this province from corner to corner to corner, around this province, meeting with school boards, school boards who'll actually put their name behind an agreement.

What we have brought forward last week, Mr. Speaker, we've announced the largest ever school operating funding increase in provincial history — \$180 million that'll go right into our schools and supporting teachers and educators and professionals of all types. As well, Mr. Speaker, as with the multi-year funding agreement that we've signed with the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] and the 27 school divisions, is ensuring that classroom support funding stays firm for the next four years. Thank you.

[14:00]

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, when I was a school board trustee — now mind you, that was back in the days of Premier Brad Wall — I never once felt like I needed anonymity to be able to speak my mind about education. But the fact, Mr. Speaker, that trustees in this province today feel that they need to remain anonymous tells you everything you need to know about this tired and out-of-touch government.

Locally elected — elected — trustees should have the autonomy to raise the concerns that they have about education. But the result of that Premier's record is this: the result is the only autonomy they have is where to cut, year after year after year.

How can that Minister of Education claim to support school board autonomy, Mr. Speaker, when he can't even go public . . . when trustees can't even go public about the bullying from that government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, you know, this is coming from the Leader of the Opposition and opposition members who suggested that we shouldn't work with the Saskatchewan School Boards Association on this agreement, that instead we should sign an agreement with the provincial union.

Mr. Speaker, that's not what this government is going to do. We have been clear right from the start of this debate that we are going to work with our 27 locally elected school boards from all over the province, of all different sizes and types — francophone, public, Catholic. These are the people who are making the right decisions for kids' classrooms around our province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have met with these 26 out of 27 school boards. We have heard that it is the funding of this government that is going to help them continue to provide supports in our classrooms. It is time, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, for the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation to come back to the bargaining table and start looking for solutions instead of looking for excuses to stay on strike.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are sick and tired of the smarmy arrogance from that Minister of Education, and that includes a whole lot of trustees. People of this province deserve so much better, and Saskatchewan people deserve a government that gets a deal with Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, and also, also offers school boards some respect.

Mr. Speaker, it can happen, but not under this government. It's time for a change. Does the Minister of Education have any clue at all how much damage he's doing to education or to his government's credibility?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, what I can tell that Leader of the Opposition, again a former school board trustee herself, is that I have spent the time in this portfolio travelling around the province, listening directly to school boards, having frank conversations when they're actually willing to put their name behind it, actually willing to have frank discussions about

pressures that are experienced in their division, Mr. Speaker.

And our government has responded, Mr. Speaker. Our government has responded by announcing the largest ever increase to school operating funding. Taking the classroom supports funding — \$356 million in this next year's budget — and setting that as a minimum level over the next four years, providing those 27 school divisions with the predictability that they need to provide the supports that are needed in classrooms across the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our government keeps meeting the STF's [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] requests, and the STF keeps moving the goalposts. It is time for the STF to come back to the bargaining table and start looking for real solutions instead of looking for excuses to stay on strike.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, did the Minister of Education really present school divisions with a funding agreement and give them only 24 hours to accept it? Yes or no?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would remind members of the opposition and the members of the public that we have been having these discussions about supporting school divisions for the last number of months. We've been having discussions all around the province at these board tables directly with elected board Chairs and board trustees, many of which I've had my colleagues join me at, and they can speak to the frankness of those meetings and the direct conversation that we're able to have, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what we came up with was the multi-year funding agreement, delivered that to the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, had several calls with board Chairs over a number of days about the agreement. And look at this, we have come forward with a multi-year funding agreement signed and endorsed by all 27 school divisions, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that classroom supports funding — \$350 million — is set at a minimum level for the next four years. That is the type of predictable, long-term funding that school divisions in this province need to be successful.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, did the Minister of Education actually threaten school board trustees with legal action if they spoke out about his backroom deal? Yes or no?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, that is a disgusting accusation by the member opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that as the Minister of Education, as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in this province, I have a lot of respect for the people who put their name on a ballot and stand up to serve the people of this province, whether

it's on an RM council, whether it's on a municipal council, whether it's as an MLA, or whether it's a school board trustee in this province. Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for school board trustees in the province. It's unfortunate that the member would sink to that level.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, what does that minister think it says about his leadership and the culture of fear created by this Sask Party government that locally elected school board trustees don't feel safe speaking out about his threats and his backroom deals?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, you know, that member opposite wants to talk about a culture of fear. What I have worked to establish with the 27 school boards around the province, Mr. Speaker, is a culture of collaboration. Most board Chairs in this province have my direct cell phone number. I speak with board Chairs on a regular basis every single week.

That is what my job as the minister is to do, to continue to collaborate with these school boards all across the province. That's what I do on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker. That culture of fear that that member opposite talks about, I know nothing about that.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, what did the Minister of Education threaten to take away from school boards if they refused to sign his backroom deal?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, I can tell you again the discussions that I've had with boards over the last several months that have led to this multi-year funding agreement. What we have brought forward in this agreement, Mr. Speaker, is ensuring that that classroom support funding — over \$350 million provided directly to divisions to support students in classrooms all across the province — we are guaranteeing that funding over the next four years. That's what we've offered to school divisions. And we're going to continue working with school divisions to ensure that those monies impact our classrooms each and every single day.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, this is what the school board trustee had to say about the backroom deal that this minister threatened school boards into signing: "It is going to be nowhere near even the needs that we have currently, let alone the needs we're going to have in years to come with growing enrolment. It's nothing."

What is the minister's response to that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, for that member to stand up and say that a guarantee of \$356.6 million over the next four years — \$356.6 million each year for the next four years — that's not nothing. Those are real dollars that are going to impact our students, providing supports in the classroom to hire more teachers, to hire more professionals, to ensure that our kids have the best opportunity possible, Mr. Speaker.

This is a substantial agreement that we've made with school boards, an agreement that they've been asking for. We've delivered on that, endorsed by all 27 school boards, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what this member opposite is saying is absolutely ridiculous on the floor of this House.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, it's a clear question: does that Minister of Education seriously think he's doing a good job as the Minister of Education?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I see we've reached a low point of question period. I can tell this House, Mr. Speaker, I can tell the people of Saskatchewan I'm proud to serve as the MLA for The Battlefords. I work hard every single day to serve my constituents.

And as the Minister of Education, I have driven tens of thousands of kilometres all across this province to listen directly to those people who are elected across our province, in all respective areas, to represent parents and families and students in those respective school divisions. I take a lot of pride in that, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to be driving to northern Saskatchewan later this week to meet with another school division. I look forward to continuing that work and working on creating the best possible pre-K to 12 [pre-kindergarten to grade 12] education system in this province.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, right now there is chaos raging in our education system. We have trustees, elected trustees feeling bullied, and they're speaking out. We have teachers in their third month of job action. And when his constituents come to his office to speak to him, that minister called the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police].

Does the minister really think that all of these failures amount to a job well done?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, you know, in regards to what happened in my constituency office last Friday, I answered several questions to the media out in the rotunda yesterday after question period. I made it very clear that whether a member sits on that side of the House or on this side of the House or as an

independent member, at the end of the day, the staff that work for all of us in our respective communities deserve to be treated with respect and to not be intimidated at constituency offices across the province. That is a bare minimum for me as an MLA and certainly as a minister. And it's disappointing that the members opposite would expect anything different, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would just remind members opposite that the job sanctions that our students are experiencing, it is the choice of the STF leadership and the STF leadership alone. At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, we are calling on the STF leadership to return to the bargaining table. It's time to find solutions and not to be looking for excuses to continue the strike.

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

Surgical Capacity and Wait Times

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday we were joined on the floor of this Assembly by Lyndia Kakakaway. She's waiting for breast cancer care and she's waiting for knee surgery. And when I asked the Minister of Health why we have the longest wait times for knee surgery, he said, and I quote, "That is not correct."

But, Mr. Speaker, it's the minister who is not correct. Knee surgery wait times in Saskatchewan are the highest in Canada. That is a fact. Will the minister take this opportunity to correct the record?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I spoke to yesterday was significant investments that we have made into our surgical wait-list and our surgical program here in this province.

Mr. Speaker, there are provinces right across this country that are facing surgical backlogs as a result of the pandemic and other related issues. We have invested \$670 million into this year's budget for surgeries across Saskatchewan to reduce wait times in this province.

We do have work to do, Mr. Speaker. We recognize that, but we are making progress when it comes to reducing the wait times for surgeries in Saskatchewan, whether it's for knees and hips and other surgeries, knowing that there are patients, Mr. Speaker, most importantly that we need to take care of.

And that's why we're continuing to make these investments, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to work to achieve those benchmarks so that people get the surgeries that they need as quickly as possible.

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

Ms. Mowat: — He didn't even come close to answering the question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister is entitled to his own opinions, but he is not entitled to his own facts.

Saskatchewan is dead last when it comes to knee replacement wait times, and we've been dead last in Canada every year since 2019. Those are the facts. Wait times are getting longer. People

are living in pain without the care they need. How is this acceptable to this Minister of Health?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to make, as I said earlier, investments into surgeries and in a number of areas of health care in this province. That includes expanding of surgical services right across this province, getting more surgeries done wherever we can in communities right across Saskatchewan, whether it's in Regina, whether it's in Saskatoon. We're also adding additional surgeries in places like Prince Albert, where a fifth operating theatre opened in Prince Albert earlier this winter allowing for increased procedure volumes in P.A. [Prince Albert], Mr. Speaker.

These are some of the investments that we are making into surgical capacity in our province to make sure that we're adding capacity, creating more surgical opportunities for patients in this province. We going to continue to make those investments, Mr. Speaker.

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

[14:15]

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the minister likes to talk about investments. He brings out the spin. He talks about plans, but people care about results, Mr. Speaker. And the results are in. The wait time for Saskatchewan people needing a knee replacement is 466 days. Those are the facts — longer wait times than every province in Canada.

How is it that with more money going into health care than ever before, this tired and out-of-touch government has the worst results in Canada?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we talked about a little bit earlier this year — talked about some additional surgeries as a result of additional funding — from April 1st of last year to December 31st, we had the highest volume of surgeries ever completed during that nine-month period, a record number of surgeries.

Thankful to our surgical teams — the surgeons, the nurses, everybody that's part of that team — to make sure that they're collaborating to get the surgeries that people need in this province, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to continue to do that. We're going to continue to make significant investments into our surgical program and into a variety of other health care initiatives, such as we announced earlier today, with the expansion of nurse practitioners in this province and greater utilization, being able to maximize their abilities, Mr. Speaker. You're going to see more of that to come when the budget is announced next week, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, we have the longest knee surgery wait times in Canada. That is a fact. And it's also a fact that we have the longest hip replacement wait times in Canada. All of this because this tired and out-of-touch government's record of privatizing health care system, not bolstering the public system, and not investing in what front-line workers care the most about, Mr. Speaker.

What does the Minister of Health have to say to Saskatchewan people who are left waiting for a hip replacement longer than every other province in Canada?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated yesterday, since the launch several years ago of the private surgical facilities in Saskatchewan, they have performed more than 158,000 surgeries — 158,000 surgeries. What would the member for Fairview, what would she say to those people, to those people across this province, to the 158,000 surgical patients that have had those surgeries through private centres? What would she say to them?

Because we know, Mr. Speaker, what their position is on private surgeries, anything . . . Heaven forbid we dip our toes into anything private, whether it's surgeries, whether it's the two-for-one MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging]. We know they're opposed to that. They're all about ideology, Mr. Speaker, not about surgeries.

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

Ms. Mowat: — We appreciate the minister's fearmongering, Mr. Speaker. We would bolster the public system. They know we would bolster the public system and that that's the answer to get surgeries under control, Mr. Speaker. Although it is nice to see the minister auditioning for opposition; maybe he'll have his chance just yet.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party doesn't like it when we bring up their record on health care, but it's because it's a record that they can't defend. Under this Premier's watch, it's true that they're spending more money on health care ever before. They're not getting any results. That's why we have the longest wait times in Canada for knee surgeries and hip replacements. Those are the facts, Mr. Speaker.

When will this tired and out-of-touch government accept any responsibility for the damage they've done to the health care system in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Lots to choose from there, Mr. Speaker. I believe the Leader of the Opposition is on the record, if I'm not mistaken, as being opposed to private surgical centres if I'm not mistaken, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, they're getting animated over there. They don't want to talk about their record or their health care plan. They've had plenty of opportunities to say what they would do differently, to come out with some sort of a platform when it comes to health

care, but they don't, Mr. Speaker. They don't have any ideas whatsoever.

They're opposed to everything. And frankly, every opportunity they have, they go down and they run down the people of this province. They run down the health care workers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, including the member for Elphinstone-Centre yesterday who, on the topic of breast cancer, happened to call the government's announcement, I think she called it a flashy announcement, Mr. Speaker. That couldn't be further from the truth.

When we were joined by Dr. Sarah Miller for the announcement last week, Dr. Sarah Miller said that this initiative was as a result of a working group that was formed by surgeons and health care workers that "culminated in the announcement last week of the breast health centre," Mr. Speaker. That's health care workers supporting this health care system. Appreciate if the NDP didn't run them down.

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

Overdose Deaths and Treatment for Addictions

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seventy-four lives lost to overdose in just the first two months of this year. Last year a record 476 families lost a loved one. This situation is out of control, Mr. Speaker. With fewer and fewer supports when and where people need them, this crisis is only going to get worse in communities large and small all across this province.

When will this minister admit that he's got it wrong and bring forward an evidence-based plan to prevent overdoses and save lives?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every loss of life due to an overdose is a tragedy, and this government is working hard to help people overcome their addictions by supporting them so that they can lead lives in recovery.

The member opposite talks about less and less supports. It couldn't be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. Our government is adding 500 addiction treatment spaces across this province. We're making it easier for individuals to access those treatment spaces, and we are providing them with the wraparound supports that they need through recovery-oriented systems of care that will give those individuals the supports and the services that they need so that they can lead healthy lives in recovery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Government Introduces New Bear Spray Regulations

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to inform this Chamber of new provincial regulations that will restrict the possession of bear spray in public urban spaces in

Saskatchewan.

Over the past few years there have been thousands of bear spray incidents — 3,000 over the last five years alone across this province — including on the first day last June that the new Wascana pool opened here in Regina, and at outdoor summer exhibitions including in Regina, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, a few weekends ago at a mall in Saskatoon, I understand that the food court had to be cleared out twice in one afternoon. That has to stop. These new regulations will improve public safety and provide police and wildlife officers with more options to seize and charge people in possession of bear spray, including in shopping malls, movie theatres, urban parks, on exhibition grounds, and on public streets.

Mr. Speaker, bear spray is currently far too easy to get hold of. Incidents that involve it lead to injuries and disrupt the day-to-day operations of businesses, public events, and facilities across our province. That is why today my colleagues, the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, and the Minister of Environment, joined me in announcing the introduction of new provincial regulations that will restrict the possession of bear spray in public urban spaces in Saskatchewan.

The regulations will also prohibit defacing or altering bear spray in order to hide or disguise it, and those charged under the new regulations could face potential fines up to \$100,000. Bottom line: these regulations are an additional tool for law enforcement to protect the public under the provincial wildlife Act alongside federal Criminal Code provisions that apply to the use of bear spray.

Again, these provincial regulations will apply only in public urban areas because there aren't a lot of bears wandering around downtown Regina or Saskatoon. They will not apply in rural or northern areas where bear spray is typically used for safety purposes. They will not apply to conservation officers, hunters, hikers, and others who require protection from wildlife in the course of their employment or recreational activities.

And under the regulations, people will be permitted to transport bear spray from a retail location to a place where it can be lawfully stored — for example, in a private home — or lawfully used on a camping trip, for example. And lower concentration products — for example, dog spray — are not caught by these regulations. The regulations will also not apply to retailers and will not impose any additional record keeping or identification requirements on them.

Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing loud and clear for a while now that something in this area has to be done. Just one letter that I received in recent months stated as follows:

Bear macing has become prevalent in Saskatchewan, raising concerns including from parents and schools about the safety of children and students.

It continued:

I believe that we should make stricter laws for purchasing bear mace to ensure people's safety and reduce the risks associated. I hope to see a response on this important matter

and hope that we can do something to address the problems of bear macing in public areas.

Regina Police Service Deputy Chief Lorilee Davies was quoted in our news release today:

Bear spray offences are something police officers in our city and beyond are dealing with almost daily. Any time we have a new tool we can use to hold offenders accountable and deter such crimes, we welcome.

Mr. Speaker, that's what this is about — stricter laws, public safety, and reducing risks to address this growing problem. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to rise this afternoon in response to this ministerial statement, and first I'd like to thank the Minister of Justice for providing an advance copy of her statement prior to this afternoon.

As has been mentioned by the Minister of Justice, the government has now announced some new provincial regulations that will restrict the possession of bear spray in specifically public urban spaces in Saskatchewan.

Now this is a concern that I've also received in my office regarding the rising use of bear spray in public urban settings, Mr. Speaker, and the concern about the effect that this has on public safety in particular, Mr. Speaker.

So generally speaking, we welcome this announcement, Mr. Speaker. We are of course going to look at the new regulations and ensure that, in consultation with our stakeholders, that the effectiveness of those regulations as drafted are as intended by both government and the desire heard from the wider public, Mr. Speaker, especially those in the community, Mr. Speaker.

If the government, in addition to further restricting the use of bear spray . . . It would be helpful for the government to provide further funding for ways the community can reduce the incidence of gangs in their community, Mr. Speaker. If we want to talk about the root causes of why we're seeing a rising rate of use of weapons in urban settings, including bear spray, Mr. Speaker, we have to talk about the root causes of crime and why we're seeing a rise in gangs and gang violence, Mr. Speaker, in particular in Saskatchewan.

And this is a government that has reduced funding to gang-exit strategies in the past, Mr. Speaker. One suggestion for ensuring that we see less of a use of weapons, including bear spray, in addition to these regulations, would be funding these types of very important strategies, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

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 Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — 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 Amendment Act, 2023*.

I'll just briefly summarize a couple of the highlights that this bill changes under the existing Act. Courts can now order the return of money and property obtained through any coerced debt. Coerced debts cannot appear on credit reports. Therefore, you know, victims will not be denied financial services or benefits as a result of bad credit flowing from those coerced debts. And human trafficking victims can now end life leases.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be pretty brief on this bill. It's not that some of these changes are bad or wrong or going in the wrong direction, and many of my colleagues have put some positive encouragement on the record.

[14:30]

But it's almost like this Sask Party government sat down and said to itself, what is the bare minimum that we can do in this area and still get credit for, you know, being able to say that we're addressing human trafficking? How can we invest zero dollars in this and still be able to say that human trafficking is something that we take seriously, on the heels of the public humiliation of having one of their Sask Party members arrested, charged, and convicted as part of a human trafficking ring here in Regina? So you know, I'll be brief but I'll be blunt.

In my constituency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre we have a disproportionate number of vulnerable women. We have right now — and I've heard reports from women in that community — an unmarked white van driving around North Central picking women, people up and going God knows where.

This government is not doing enough to protect those vulnerable women. They are not doing enough to address poverty, to address mental health and addiction. We saw the absolutely shameful cuts to harm reduction months ago, which will impact those vulnerable women, make them more vulnerable — no question, Mr. Speaker — push the issue of addiction further into the shadows instead of moving forward and addressing it like the health care crisis that it is. A lack of education and outreach around this issue, Mr. Speaker, and real action to combat the ongoing effects of intergenerational trauma as a result of Saskatchewan's legacy of colonialism.

Mr. Speaker, I'd love to see some action on those things. Then we will meaningfully get at offering meaningful assistance and support to the very real issue of human trafficking in our communities and offer meaningful support to vulnerable women in our communities.

So with that, I'm looking forward to hear from our critic, the member from Douglas Park, the critic for Justice. I know she's been engaging stakeholders around this and we'll have many questions at committee on this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that I'll 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 Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and enter into the debate on Bill No. 153, *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2023*. Now I know several of my colleagues have already entered into the debate on this bill, put forward some thoughtful commentary on the legislation. I will be brief in my comments, Mr. Speaker. I know that the critic has been doing some good work reaching out to stakeholders as this bill does make several changes to the legislation that we do feel that municipal councils, hamlets, RMs, and the like will be interested in and have thoughts on, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to point to one change in particular, Mr. Speaker. There's a repeal and replace of section 77 of the original legislation, *The Municipalities Act*, and this provision deals with disputes between hamlet board and council. This is something that does pop up sometimes, Mr. Speaker. The new section 77 does define what a dispute is. It actually limits what is considered a dispute pursuant to the legislation, which is different than the current legislation, Mr. Speaker.

So under the new provisions, a dispute will be limited to the following matters:

- (a) capital planning and expenditures for public utilities within the organized hamlet;
- (b) the percentage of taxes and special licence fees allocated to the hamlet account pursuant to clause 69(1)(b);
- (c) a hamlet levy requested pursuant to section 70;
- (d) the provision of services pursuant to section 74;
- (e) a breach of any of the prescribed contents, terms and conditions, or other matter contained in the agreement entered into pursuant to section 68.1;
- (f) the council and the hamlet board not entering into an agreement as required pursuant to section 68.1 or not being

able to agree to modifications to an agreement;

(g) any other prescribed matter".

Mr. Speaker, it'd be interesting to know if that new definition limits disputes that were considered under the legislation prior to the introduction of this new bill, Mr. Speaker, and what the purpose of that would be.

And I'm sure that my colleague, our municipal relations critic, is asking those questions of our stakeholders. And I appreciate the good work she's been doing, going across the province, reaching out to municipal leadership, RM leadership, and hamlet leadership, Mr. Speaker, and getting their feedback not just on this piece of legislation but on all issues that pertain to them and the future of this province, Mr. Speaker.

In order to allow her to facilitate that good work, I'm prepared now to adjourn debate on Bill No. 153.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 154

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

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and enter into the debate on Bill No. 154, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker.

Now this bill makes several changes, Mr. Speaker, one being that electric facilities do not deposit the following into the tech fund: compliance payments, debt repayments associated with compliance, and administrative penalties. In addition, Mr. Speaker, some other facilities may still have to pay into the tech fund, depending on the type of facility, and all money collected from electric facilities will become public money now, which I think means that it will fall under the GRF [General Revenue Fund]. I could be wrong.

But I know that our critic is doing some really important work looking into this and what's happening behind the scenes with respect to this legislation and what the impact of this bill will be, Mr. Speaker. I'm excited to hear his thoughts on the bill, and I know he'll have some good questions of officials at committee, Mr. Speaker.

In order to allow other colleagues to enter into the debate on this legislation, I'm prepared now to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 154.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader 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.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:37.]

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Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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