



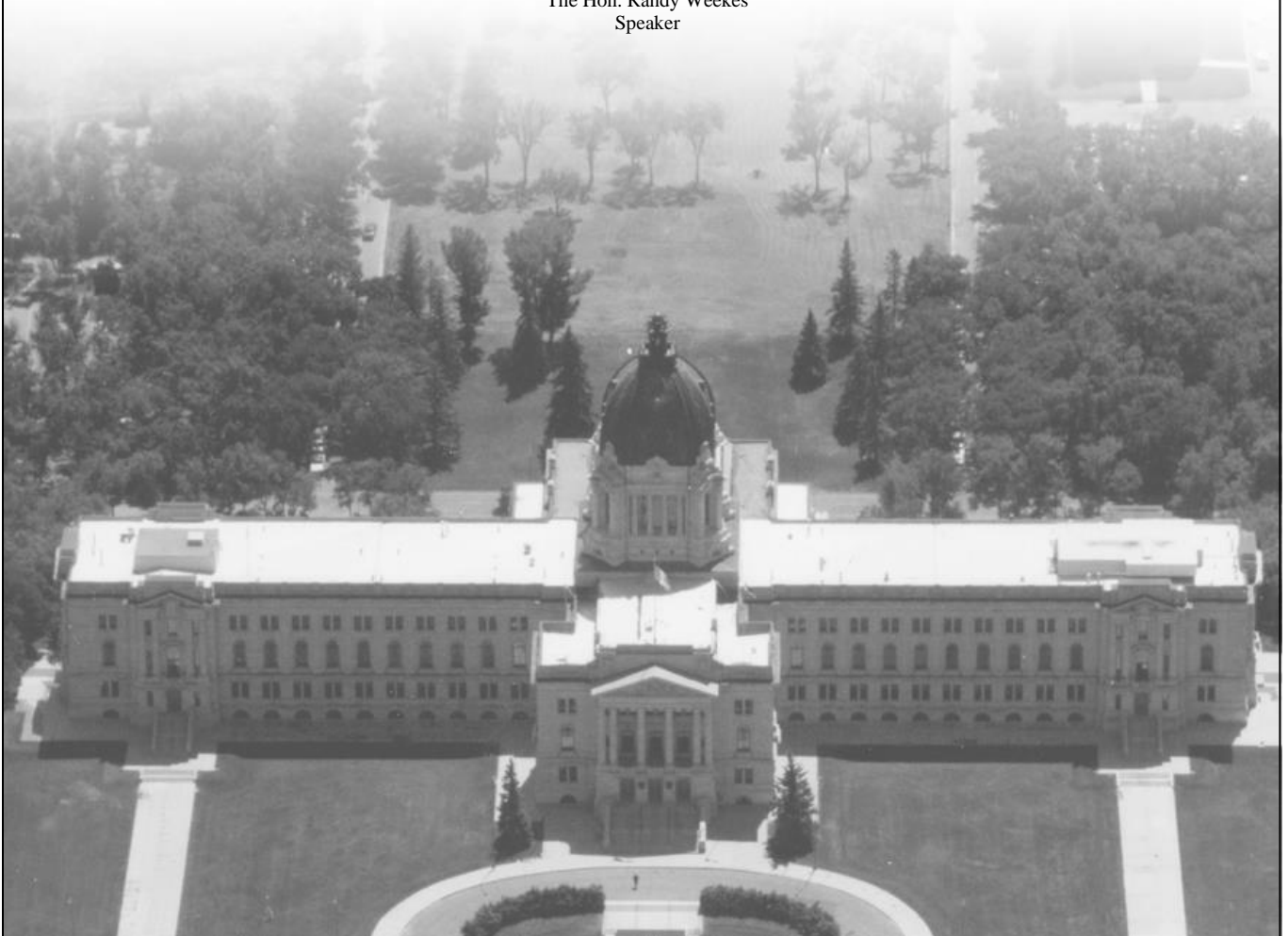
FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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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Domotor, Ryan — Cut Knife-Turtleford (Ind.)	Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)
Duncan, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)	Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP)
Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)	Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)
Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)	Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
Francis, Ken — Kindersley (SP)	Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)
Friesen, Marv — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP)	Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)
Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP)	Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP)	Skoropad, Dana — Arm River (SP)
Hargrave, Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Harpauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)	Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)	Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)	Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)	Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
Kaeding, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)	Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (Ind.)	

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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Deputy Clerk — Kathy Burianyak
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 Minister of Sport, Culture and . . .

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Well thank you very much. Okay, we all know I'm short but . . . 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: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. April is Sikh Heritage Month in Saskatchewan. And today seated in the Speaker's gallery, I'd like to introduce some individuals who were instrumental in arranging the proclamation. Please join me in welcoming Rajbir Singh, president of the Sikh Society of Regina; Manmeet Singh, secretary of the society; Maninder Singh, renowned preacher of Sikhism; Harpinder Singh, head granthi, priest of the gurdwara here in Regina. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Joining me are a number of guests from the Sikh Society. And today, Saskatchewan's population is at an all-time high, more diverse than ever. And we are so thankful to our strong and growing Sikh community who have made numerous philanthropic, cultural, and economic contributions to our province. The Sikh Society of Regina has done an outstanding job of supporting newcomers, raising awareness of Sikhism.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like all members to join me in celebrating Sikh Heritage Month 2024, and welcome these special guests to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to join with the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport to welcome all these individuals to their Legislative Assembly. I want to wish them a wonderful Sikh Heritage Month. Thank you so much for the work that you do with the Sikh heritage society. I want to thank you for the work that you do here in Regina and Saskatoon communities, specifically here in Regina with the work that you do feeding some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

And I very much look forward to the events that we will see throughout April. I know I always very much enjoy attending the parades and the festivals in my city, my home city of Saskatoon, and so I will be looking forward once again. And so I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these honourable visitors to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to join the minister and the member opposite in welcoming the group from my community of Regina, Sikh Society Regina.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Punjabi.]

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join the minister and member opposite and my colleague as well and would like to welcome Sikh Society of Regina to their Legislative Building. Great friendship with them, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to say congratulations on Sikh Heritage Month, April is, and we're going to be presenting a proclamation by the minister right after question period, Mr. Speaker, as he mentioned that. And would like to say thank you very much for your contribution, means a lot to Saskatchewan. And welcome to your Legislative Building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join with the members opposite and the member from Meewasin to welcome these esteemed guests and community leaders to their Assembly, the leadership and members of the Sikh Society of Regina and here with Sikh Heritage Month.

This is an incredible time to recognize the contributions of Sikh Canadians, and those contributions to this community and this province and this country are enormous, Mr. Speaker. We've witnessed the goodness and generosity of this community and the Sikh Society of Regina first-hand in extending care to the less fortunate, assisting those with settlement, in planting trees, and being involved in so many aspects of our community, our province from a cultural perspective and certainly from an economic perspective. So it's my real honour to welcome these members here.

As has been mentioned we look forward to honouring their contributions throughout this month. We look forward as well as was identified, the Sikh Day parade. I know on May 11th in Regina, the streets of Regina will be full with colour and life, and we look forward to joining once again to march in that beautiful, beautiful parade. Thank you very much.

On behalf of the official opposition, I want to thank these members that are here today and Sikh Canadians from across Saskatchewan for their contributions that build and better this province and country.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask for 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. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to my colleagues. Well, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, in your gallery it's my pleasure to introduce a special member of my office, someone who's worked with me a very long time and today celebrates a very special milestone, Mr. Speaker.

Dawn-Marie Cherkewich is my senior administrative assistant. Dawn-Marie began working in this building in January of 2012 with the then minister of Advanced Education, Rob Norris — many of us will remember Rob — and she went on to provide further administrative support, Mr. Speaker, in the offices of the ministers of Employment and Immigration, the Minister Responsible for Innovation, Saskatchewan Research Council, and SaskPower. Mr. Speaker, she's supported me from the time two weeks after I was sworn in as a cabinet minister in 2012, and I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that feels just like yesterday.

And as she worked steadily with me over the last 11 years in various cabinet roles that I've had the privilege to hold, Mr. Speaker, and of course in my current role as the Minister of Advanced Education, she also supported a number of my colleagues including the Minister of Energy and Resources, the Provincial Secretary, and the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and the Minister Responsible for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan].

Dawn has also worked as a public servant in the Ministry of Education for 10 years in the strategic policy branch and in the deputy minister's office as executive coordinator. In total, Mr. Speaker, Dawn-Marie has now been employed with the Government of Saskatchewan for over 22 years, and today, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that she's now the longest serving administrative assistant in this building.

And on a personal note, Mr. Speaker, it was my honour to serve as her celebrant at her wedding to Brad in September of '22. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Dawn-Marie for all she does for me and for my colleagues, and more importantly, Mr. Speaker, to thank her for her friendship.

So I'd ask all members of the legislature to help me welcome Dawn-Marie to her Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the other members of the Legislative Assembly, I'm honoured to welcome 20 public servants who are seated in your gallery.

They're here as a part of the parliamentary program for the public service. They have been here all day, Mr. Speaker. They've had an opportunity to tour the building, meet with various officials in the building. They've had an opportunity to meet with the

Premier in the cabinet room, as well as the Minister of Justice and myself. They'll be attending question period and proceedings that take place after question period. And I know I'll have an opportunity to meet with them and, I believe, a member of the opposition and yourself, Mr. Speaker, if that hasn't already taken place.

Mr. Speaker, participants today come from the following ministries: Advanced Education; Corrections, Policing and Public Safety; Environment; Government Relations; Health; Immigration and Career Training; Justice and Attorney General; the Public Service Commission; SaskBuilds and Procurement; Social Services; Trade and Export Development; and the Legislative Assembly Services.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in not only welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly but thanking them for the work that they do each and every day to provide support for all of us and all the people of Saskatchewan. So I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to join with the minister in welcoming this group of public servants to their Legislative Assembly. It sounds like you've already had a very full day with a full afternoon to go. I hope you found and continue to find your experience today rewarding and insightful.

We very much enjoy the opportunity to — like the minister had mentioned along with himself and the Speaker, as well as other members — have the opportunity to have a question-and-answer time with you. Very much looking forward to that opportunity with myself later this afternoon.

And just to echo what the minister had already said, public service is one of the most important roles we can have in this province. Thank you so much for what you do on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan each and every single day. Very much value you and the work that you do for this province, and look forward again to the opportunity to chat later. Once again, I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to take a moment to welcome two of the parliamentary participants. Deanna Myers, a good friend of a friend. We share a bestie and I just wanted to give her a special shout-out today and welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

And also Justine Schneider . . . Walton. I'm sorry, I almost forgot there. But Justine and I have known each other for a long time. Has been a great volunteer in the community and has done many amazing things to make Saskatchewan a better place. So I just want to welcome these two amazing people to their Legislative Assembly.

Thank you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D. Harrison: — We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: whereas the Trudeau Liberal-NDP [New Democratic Party] coalition carbon tax is one of the main causes of affordability issues and inflation in the nation of Canada; that the federal Liberal-NDP government was politically motivated in issuing a carve-out for home heating oil; and that the Government of Saskatchewan's decision to not collect nor 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 that tax out of pocket at the pumps, grocery stores, and more.

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

The below undersigned are residents of Saskatoon and Martensville.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present the following petition. The people who signed this petition wish to bring to your attention the following: Saskatchewan needs legislation to ensure provincial duty-to-consult is fulfilled and is carried out with the honour of the Crown; Saskatchewan needs legislation to ensure the provincial duty-to-consult is fulfilled and is carried out with the Crown; the Sask Party government did not follow its own guidelines on consulting with inherent and treaty rights holders while drafting the duty-to-consult policy; the Sask Party government continues to ignore inherent and treaty rights holders and maintains its position to not address cumulative impacts, effects on treaty rights.

The folks who have signed this petition . . . I'll read the prayer. The folks who have signed this petition . . . the prayer. I do apologize. Oh my goodness.

[13:45]

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to enshrine duty-to-consult into law by enacting meaningful duty-to-consult legislation.

The folks who signed this petition reside in Prince Albert. I do so present.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise yet again today to present another petition calling on the Government of

Saskatchewan to improve labour laws in the province. Those who have signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: that even after the October 1st increase, Saskatchewan's minimum wage remains the lowest in Canada.

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

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

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, all these provisions can be found in private member's bill, Bill No. 613. We do hope the government passes that legislation. Those who have signed this petition come from Weyburn, Midale, and Oxbow. I do so present.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling on this government to address the housing crisis in Saskatchewan and call for more affordable homes and tenant protections. The undersigned residents of this petition wish to bring to the attention of this government that the cost of housing in Saskatchewan has skyrocketed, making it increasingly difficult for many individuals and families to secure safe and affordable housing.

Over the past decade, homelessness has surged across Saskatchewan communities, pushing people onto the streets. Meanwhile this government has made drastic cuts to housing programs. The Government of Saskatchewan has wasted over 600 million on vacant housing units. Some of these remain uninhabitable because of cuts to the maintenance and renovation budget over the last budget. The 9 million announced this year just ain't going to cut it, Mr. Speaker.

Monthly rent prices in Saskatchewan have significantly increased. We see some of the lowest vacancy rates we've seen in years as a result. People have been forced to cut back on groceries and use the food bank.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the

government to immediately implement a comprehensive affordable housing strategy aimed at helping individuals and families in securing stable and affordable housing. The strategy must restore the cuts made to housing and invest in the development of affordable and low-income housing units.

The signatories also urge the government to enforce rental protections for tenants. The signatories reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Embracing Chardi Kala during Sikh Heritage Month

Mr. Grewal: — It's another great day in Regina, Mr. Speaker. April is Sikh Heritage Month. I'm so happy to see so many members from my Sikh community sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

This month we celebrate Vaisakhi. Mr. Speaker, as a people, Sikhs are known to be warriors, fighters against oppression. Chardi kala is a concept in Sikhism that refers to a state of high spirits, optimism, and resilience. The term originates from the Punjabi words "chardi" meaning "rising or ascending" and "kala," meaning "skill or condition." Together "chardi kala" signifies a positive and uplifted state of mind, even in the face of challenges, difficulties, or adversities.

The concept of chardi kala is deeply rooted in Sikh teachings and is often invoked in daily prayers, hymns, and discussions in our Sikh temples. It reflects the resilience and unwavering spirit that Sikhs aspire to cultivate as they navigate life's journey.

Sikhs contribute to their local economy wherever they reside in the world. Maintaining chardi kala is considered a virtue and an integral part of the Sikh way of life. As we honour Sikh Heritage Month in Saskatchewan, embracing chardi kala shapes a path where adversity becomes a catalyst for growth, inspiring us to choose hope and resilience in our journey. I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy Vaisakhi on this coming weekend. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatoon Hosts Winterruption Outdoor Festival

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, Winterruption Outdoor is a joyous outdoor event that happens every year in my constituency of Saskatoon Nutana. The festival started off as a joint effort organized between the Broadway Theatre in Saskatoon and a group in Regina, and has grown to include other cities across the country. It was started to have some fun in the winter and take advantage of the slower entertainment season by putting on some great musical shows and live events. The festival has spread across the constituency and now has events not just at the Broadway Theatre but other venues in Saskatoon Nutana, including a two-day event for the whole family.

The outside portion of the festival offers activities in the

community for everyone, including families and kids, to get outside and celebrate winter with games, sleigh rides, workshops, music and dance performances, and wouldn't be complete without marshmallow roasting and hot chocolate.

Along with my caucus mates, the members from Saskatoon Fairview and Saskatoon Meewasin, I had so much fun connecting with people not just in my constituency but from across Saskatoon at this event.

Winterruption is one of the many great festivals and events that take place in my riding and connects our local community, Saskatoon, and beyond. I want to thank everyone who helped make Winterruption such a great success this year.

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

Melville Resident Honoured for Community Service

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Ukrainian Canadian Congress of Saskatchewan recently honoured a Melville resident as one of their 2023 Nation Builders and Community Recognition honourees. Bohdan, or we know him as Bunny Halyk of Melville, was one of the recipients this year of the leadership and volunteerism award in the Community Recognition category. He is one of 10 people from Saskatchewan recognized this year.

Born in Birmingham, Saskatchewan in 1928, Bunny has spent a lifetime participating and supporting his Ukrainian and extended community. His commitment to his parish is exemplified by his decades of service as vice-president and president of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Melville. He has been parish liaison for rural parishes, maintained the local cemetery, led the identification and placement of markers and nameplates for the local cemetery, and arranged annual community memorial services at the cemetery for the past 25 years.

Bunny is a founding member of the Melville & District Agri-Park, past executive member of the Melville Millionaires baseball club and Melville minor sports. Bunny was awarded a national jubilee medal for volunteerism by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada on their centenary. He has also received civic awards for various contributions to Melville.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that we acknowledge the commitment and perseverance of people like Bunny Halyk for the betterment of all the communities and organizations that he has served.

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

Saskatoon Resident Recognized for Contribution to the Arts Community

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Saskatoon Meewasin is home to so many amazing people and it is an honour to represent them. Today I want to highlight one constituent who I was honoured to nominate for a Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal. Kathleen Crowther is a philanthropist, community builder, fundraiser, and volunteer with a passion for making

positive change in her community. Just ask any of the donors, volunteers, or co-workers she works with.

Kathleen is also passionate about the arts and culture sector and truly believes in its power to strengthen communities. You only have to ask her for stories from her time volunteering backstage at the Saskatchewan Jazz Festival, co-founding Nuit Blanche in Saskatoon, chairing Paved Arts, or mentoring with Business for the Arts.

Kathleen is proud to serve as a board member with YWCA Saskatoon and the Saskatoon chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. When Kathleen is not working, you'll find her enjoying everything our beautiful province has to offer and is proud to call Saskatoon home with her partner, Brett.

Mr. Speaker, Kathleen's commitment to volunteerism and her commitment to making her community a better place, along with her infectious, positive attitude make her an inspirational figure for all who meet her. I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Kathleen on receiving the Queen's Jubilee Medal and thank her for the hard work she does every day in our Saskatoon community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Melfort Small Business Owners Inspire at Award Banquet

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. March 23rd was an evening I won't soon forget. My wife and I joined our chamber of commerce president, Cal Gratton, and his wife, Teresa, for the Mel-Bex business awards banquet in Melfort. To be expected, that evening many local businesses and friends were honoured for their service and success. What no one expected was the ad lib panel discussion with the evening's award winners.

Our MC [master of ceremonies], Amanda Perrot, led that discussion, asking what were the biggest challenges the winners had faced over the last five years and how they overcame them. Common theme — no surprise — was COVID and family. The words of RJ's Urban Garden restaurant owner, Raianne Maga, winner of the evening's Customer Service Award became to be ones that I will carry for life. What got her through the darkest days and toughest challenges were her faith and her family. Giving up was not an option. And through it all she learned in order to overcome, she would pivot and not panic, and bend but not break.

Another common theme of the evening was the multiple business owners' deflection of credit for their success towards their staff and their customers. That's the Saskatchewan I'm thankful to be part of, one where we celebrate the successes of others and support the local businesses who've invested their lives in their communities and in their neighbours. And when we face adversity, giving up is not an option. In the words of a prairie girl from Melfort, we will pivot and not panic; we will bend and not break.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River

Valley.

Saskatchewan Sees Increase in Building Permits

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is building a strong economy, whether or not the members opposite want to admit it. Statistics Canada building permits released earlier today show we are leading the nation. Building permits were up a remarkable 96.2 per cent month over month from January to February of 2024. Saskatchewan also saw an impressive increase of 22.6 per cent year over year in total permits issued, and a massive 147 per cent increase in non-residential permits.

Permits issued for large industrial construction projects were cited for this growth including recent announcements of new facilities coming to Saskatchewan. These statistics are further proof that our efforts to attract investment are paying off as record capital investment continues to pour into Saskatchewan.

This is a far cry from the days of the NDP government when people were fleeing the province in droves, investment disappeared, schools and hospitals were closed. Their economic policies consist of opposing our key resource sectors and following the lead of their coalition bosses Justin Trudeau and Jagmeet Singh. That's bad for business and bad for Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan can't afford to go back to the days under the NDP and crash our economy. Our government will always put Saskatchewan people first because we know the members opposite never will.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Opposition Position on Mining Sector

Mr. Francis: — Mr. Speaker, we all know how important words are in this institution and that when people speak, we should believe them. Well the NDP continue to show us every day who they are with their own words, a party who bashes our provincial economy, day in and day out. And yesterday was no exception.

Last night in committee, the member for Saskatoon Centre suggested that Saskatchewan's mining industry is capable of, and I quote, the raping of mother earth. End quote. Mr. Speaker, that is what the NDP thinks of one of our most important sectors. Mr. Speaker, this is what the NDP thinks most days. And, Mr. Speaker, this sector creates thousands of jobs and brings billions of dollars of investment to our province. It is especially important to northern communities. Their words, their position, Mr. Speaker.

That's the kind of radical NDP extremism that would shut down our resource sector, kill thousands of good-paying jobs, and drive thousands out of our province. And when the member opposite was asked about her party's position on nuclear? Crickets, Mr. Speaker. What would the folks in the North think of that?

Mr. Speaker, the NDP keep showing us exactly who they are and, perhaps more importantly, what they would do. They would overtax. They would over-regulate. And they would dismantle our provincial economy, just like they did the last time.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Fuel Tax and Provincial Economy

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this Premier has the worst job creation record in the country — 6,000 jobs lost last month. People are struggling, but this tired and out-of-touch government refuses to listen. In fact they're making things worse.

Mr. Speaker, it's time for a change. And it's past time for that government to offer some relief to the people of this province. Why won't the Premier cut the fuel tax for six months and offer Saskatchewan people the break that they so desperately deserve?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the data that I have, Statistics Canada data, says there was 10,500 jobs . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . well Statistics Canada, Mr. Speaker, does put out what the job numbers were in Saskatchewan year over year, and it was 10,500 this past year.

[14:00]

What this has done has attracted, has attracted about 30,000 people to the province of Saskatchewan to make a community in Saskatchewan their home over the course of just the last year, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is, is that we are growing, whether it be jobs or population, at a rate that we have not seen since 1914 in this province, Mr. Speaker. That is the record of Saskatchewan today, Mr. Speaker.

And if the Leader of the Opposition is so certain that it is time for a change, we should portray what that change actually looks like, Mr. Speaker. Because right now today, in BC [British Columbia], Mr. Speaker, their gas tax is 27 cents a litre. Under NDP BC, Mr. Speaker, their gas tax is 27 cents a litre. And that change involves running an \$8 billion deficit and being downgraded twice just this past week.

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

Health Care Staffing and Provision of Pediatric Care

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, not only is that Premier failing to deliver when it comes to the cost of living, they're failing to deliver when it comes to health care in this province.

Mr. Speaker, today in your gallery we're joined by Kaitlyn and Jordi Soron. Their two-year-old, their two-year-old daughter, Mr. Speaker, needs specialized care at the children's hospital from a pediatric gastroenterologist. But as we've canvassed many times, Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly, the children's hospital still doesn't have a pediatric GI [gastroenterologist], and this family has been forced to go to Toronto for the care that their daughter needs.

Does the Premier, does the Premier think it's at all acceptable for Kaitlyn and Jordi to be forced to travel thousands of miles just to get the care that they need for their daughter?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I welcome Kaitlyn and Jordi to their Assembly here today, and I would be pleased to meet with them after the proceedings this afternoon if they so choose.

Mr. Speaker, we know that we have some gaps to fill at the children's hospital in Saskatoon. There is additional funding in this year's budget on top of last year's funding to develop a comprehensive pediatric gastroenterology program at the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital. There is recruitment that is under way for the vacancies that we have at the JPCH [Jim Pattison Children's Hospital] right now, Mr. Speaker.

We had a bit of a discussion last night in the Health estimates about this, amongst several other issues. We have asked that the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] as well as the Saskatchewan health recruitment agency, that they make this a priority. It has been a priority for them to fill those vacancies. And, Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the SHA is in the process of finalizing a contract with two candidates, and we'll have more information to share on that in the near future. But I would just reiterate that we are doing everything we can to fill these vacancies, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this is a failure of leadership, and that responsibility rests with the Premier of this province. This family is watching their daughter in pain with her condition worsening. Now they did have a pediatric GI here in Saskatchewan, but when that doctor left they were forced to go out of the province all the way to Toronto.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they are not the first family to be forced to leave the province to get a GI specialist for their young one but, Mr. Speaker, they should be the last. Will the minister meet with the family? And will he make sure, more importantly, that we have the specialists that we need in this province to tend to sick kids?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said at the beginning of my previous answer, yes, I would gladly meet with the family here this afternoon. We'll sit down in my office and have a discussion about their personal circumstances, Mr. Speaker, and I'd be happy to do that today.

As I said previously, Mr. Speaker, we are working through the SHA and through the health recruitment agency to fill those vacancies at the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital. I would say the vast majority of positions are filled at the JPCH. We do need to fill these vacancies when it comes to pediatric gastroenterology. It is a highly sought-after specialty, not just here in Saskatchewan but obviously at hospitals right across this country.

Making sure that we are training — and that's not just us here in Saskatchewan, but other provinces and territories as well — training and recruiting and retaining health care specialists, particularly those when it comes to children's health, it's a priority for us for government. And we're going to ensure that

we do everything we can to get those vacancies filled as quickly as possible, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, to state it clearly, these are not just their personal circumstances. This is the case for every family in the province whose child needs a GI specialist.

Now this is a party that loves to talk about opening buildings, whether it's the children's hospital or the urgent care centre. But, Mr. Speaker, predictably they're clapping for themselves while they fail to staff those facilities. Mr. Speaker, we all know that buildings do not provide health care to Saskatchewan people. Health care workers do. And when we don't have health care workers like GI specialists, families like Kaitlyn and Jordi's are forced to pay out of pocket to go to Toronto to get the care that should be available here at home.

Mr. Speaker, this is a rich province. We should be able to take care of our kids at home. Does the Premier accept any responsibility for the Sask Party's failure to keep staff in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And you know, we have some outstanding staff, specialists, doctors, nurses, anesthesiologists, teams right across this province that are providing very excellent care for the people of Saskatchewan. And it is disappointing, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition would not recognize the great work being done by these teams, Mr. Speaker.

There's significant progress being taken . . . Mr. Speaker, we are making . . . Mr. Speaker, we are making significant progress and continue to make progress, recognizing of course that we do have vacancies to fill, as do other provincial health care systems as well, Mr. Speaker.

Just as an example, in 2023 we had eight new anesthesiologists beginning work in Saskatchewan, with 10 more scheduled to begin their practice in 2024. That's in the area of anesthesiology. More work to do, Mr. Speaker, but we are seeing significant progress when it comes to recruiting specialists, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Kaitlyn and Jordi decided to come to the legislature after waiting for months, months of writing letters to the government and to this minister. They've exhausted all avenues so that their two-year-old daughter could access the care that she so desperately needs. People shouldn't have to fight this hard for care, especially for a child, Mr. Speaker. And they shouldn't have to travel two provinces away for it either.

Does the minister think it is acceptable that this family, or any family for that matter, has to travel two provinces away for care that should be available here in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that my office has been working on casework with this particular family, and again I will meet with them after the proceedings here today to have a further conversation with them, Mr. Speaker.

To the member's question, I would say that we are trying to provide as many services as we can here in Saskatchewan so that they are close to home for patients and for children, Mr. Speaker. When we opened the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital a number of years ago, this was a significant project for this government, and one that we are proud to support, along with the fundraising efforts of the foundation in the city of Saskatoon that raises significant dollars for this particular project, Mr. Speaker.

The children's hospital saw an increase of 22 beds specifically for mothers and children in Saskatoon. We've increased the number of pediatric in-patient beds as well from 37 to 45. As I said previously, we are working to fill the remaining vacancies that currently exist when it comes to doctors and specialists at the children's hospital.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If everything was going great for this family in the care that their daughter was getting, they wouldn't be here at the legislature today.

But this isn't just about pediatric gastroenterologists that this government can't retain. According to saskdocs and confirmed at committee last night, there are 15 pediatric vacancies for specialists working with the children's hospital.

Mr. Speaker, we have vacancies across the board in pediatrics — pediatric cardiology, pediatric emergency room specialists, pediatric respiratory, pediatric neurology, and the list goes on.

To the minister: how many other families are forced to travel out of our province due to this government's failure to recruit and retain pediatric specialists?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have taken a number of steps to work to fill those vacancies through the establishment of the health recruitment agency, through additional training programs, through the creation of new incentives, as well to make sure that we are offering the most competitive compensation that we can for specialists that are in very highly sought-after specialties, Mr. Speaker. Right across this country they're in demand.

In reference to the numbers that the member opposite raised in his question and that we discussed last night — I stand to be corrected; I'm going from memory here — but I believe of the numbers that he mentioned, I think six of those, six and a half of those FTEs [full-time equivalent] are actually currently in the process of being filled. And we have candidates that are set to sign contracts and to take those positions. And the remaining 4.5 FTEs, progress is under way to get those individuals hired as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fifteen vacancies for pediatric specialists working at the children's hospital out of how many? According to the government's own numbers, back in 2016 they planned to have 52 pediatric specialists working at the children's hospital. If there are currently 15 vacancies, Mr. Speaker, that's a vacancy rate of 29 per cent. Nearly a quarter of physicians meant to provide adequate and accessible care to children in the province are vacant.

To the Minister: does the Minister really believe that his recruitment and retention plan is working when 15 positions are currently still vacant?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I stated previously, this is a priority for our government. The children's hospital itself is a priority for our government, something that was very important for this government, previous Health ministers, previous members sitting around the Cabinet and the caucus table to ensure that we did have and would create a children's hospital in Saskatchewan like so many other provinces do have.

We are proud of this facility, Mr. Speaker, that did not exist prior to us having the opportunity to serve in government. And I would say that none of these positions would have existed prior to that, Mr. Speaker. We are making significant investments into children's health care in Saskatchewan. In '24-25 we're making over \$2.2 million in investments to improve health care access for Saskatchewan's children and youth patients.

As I've said before, we recognize that we have some vacancies to fill at the children's hospital. We're committed to working with our partners to get the people that we need to fill those spots so that we can provide care to children here in our province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Provision of Surgical Procedures

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the sad truth is that this tired and out-of-touch government is failing the needs of patients both young and old. Saskatchewan has the worst wait times in Canada for knee and hip replacement surgeries. That represents so many people in pain. And this isn't some big reveal, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has held that record for five straight years, notwithstanding how many patients that minister has sent to private clinics in Calgary.

Will the minister admit his surgical solution isn't working? Or will he renew the contract with this private Sask Party donor in Calgary?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The current average wait time for hip replacements in Saskatchewan is now

176 days, which is significantly lower than the time reported by CIHI [Canadian Institute for Health Information] of 232 days, and lower than our pre-pandemic wait times of 189 days.

Mr. Speaker, I detailed some of these numbers yesterday, and I think we probably talked about it in estimates last night. We are on track to complete the most orthopedic surgeries in the province's history. We've already completed the most knee replacement surgeries in this province's history, at 3,700 knee surgeries being completed. Mr. Speaker, in the first three quarters of the previous fiscal year our government has done over 2,000 more knee replacement surgeries than were done in the entire fiscal year of 2006-2007.

We do have more work to do, Mr. Speaker. We're supporting our surgical teams in this province with record funding investments, record investments of funding into the surgical program, and we're going to continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, a lot of spin, a lot of numbers there. Worst in the nation — I didn't hear the Health minister challenge that fact because he cannot.

Mr. Speaker, the private surgery scheme is a fantastic deal, not for patients and not for Saskatchewan taxpayers, but it's great for that private surgery clinic and for that Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker. That private clinic has donated over \$14,000 to the Sask Party, and what did they get? Mr. Speaker, they got a \$6 million sole-source contract for hip and knee surgeries.

Will the minister keep helping out his political donors? Or will he actually seek out solutions to the surgical crisis?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Mr. Speaker, this government has been seeking out solutions to make sure that we're increasing capacity when it comes to getting surgeries done in this province and, when necessary, with partnerships such as the one we have currently in Calgary with the Canadian Surgical Solutions to accommodate up to 250 publicly funded joint replacement surgeries for eligible Saskatchewan patients.

[14:15]

I'm not going to read the quote again, Mr. Speaker, for the members opposite. They could pull up *Hansard* from yesterday and read the quote that I gave from one of the patients, a health care worker, Mr. Speaker, who said that this is a good initiative and she was very appreciative of that option, Mr. Speaker.

And as I have said previously, there are \$3.5 million more invested into the surgical program this year over last year, and that is a record amount. It builds on previous years, Mr. Speaker. We continue to invest more money into our surgical programs, Mr. Speaker, to get more surgeries done, to get the wait-list cut down. And we're going to support our surgical teams, Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Five years of failure, Mr. Speaker, five years of last place. Surely we can do better than that. Yesterday the minister was fairly sure that there must have been a competitive selection process to choose the surgery provider for the sole-source contract. Probably, he thinks, Mr. Speaker. But our job is not to give that minister the benefit of the doubt. So will he commit to tabling documentation detailing the ministry's selection process for picking that exclusive provider of hip and knee surgeries, and when will we get it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This was done through a request for proposals, an RFP, an open, transparent process that we would use to do this. Not a secret, Mr. Speaker. And it's done according to how these sorts of initiatives should be implemented, Mr. Speaker.

We do know that the NDP would scrap any sort of initiative like this when it comes to publicly funded, privately operated surgeries and other types of services, Mr. Speaker. Again, we are making record investments into our surgical program in this province and doing more surgeries. And I detailed some of the numbers earlier, but more surgeries, for example, in the areas of hips and knees than were done in the entire final year of the NDP government's time in government back in 2006-2007, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, if the minister needs any assistance with providing documents for that selection process, which I think we heard him commit to providing, I'm sure he can ask Kevin Doherty. Kevin Doherty is a former Sask Party MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Regina Northeast, minister of Finance and minister of Advanced Education, and the man who lobbied on behalf of Surgical Solutions himself.

According to the Registrar of Lobbyists, he had informal communications, written communications, meetings, phone calls, and presentations with the Premier and minister and senior staff on behalf of that private clinic in Calgary that won the \$6 million sole-source contract.

So while he's at it, will the minister commit to tabling any documentation about communication with his former colleague and lobbyist, Kevin Doherty, on the sweetheart deal with their donor?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my understanding that Mr. Doherty did not lobby on this, was not involved in this particular RFP, Mr. Speaker. So that's what I've been informed of, Mr. Speaker.

Again, you know, we have to be cautious. When we hear from the member for . . . where is she from? Elphinstone, Regina Elphinstone. The member for Regina Elphinstone who puts a lot of things on the record, Mr. Speaker, disparaging our health care

system, disparaging health care workers. For example, I'll remind the members opposite that she called the breast health centre announcement a flashy announcement or something to that effect, Mr. Speaker, minimizing the impact of that particular investment.

And now she says how dare I, Mr. Speaker, for the record. So let's remember, Mr. Speaker, let's remember the source of these comments, Mr. Speaker.

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

Letter to Trustees and Contract Negotiations with Teachers

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, on April 5th the Minister of Education sent a letter directly to trustees, asking them to publicly join him in his attack on teachers in our province:

I would encourage you and your boards to consider how you can best communicate with your constituents about these realities and the teachers' union's demands on your local school division and school communities. The implications are not insignificant, and your voice as the local school board is needed.

Three days later a board Chair, who is the nominated candidate for the Sask Party, signed a memo that was forwarded directly to teachers, a memo that was parroting many of the Sask Party lines.

Is this what respecting local school board autonomy and good-faith bargaining looks like under this tired and out-of-touch government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member opposite that if he wants to throw rocks, the president of their own party is also a school trustee in this province, and school trustees in this province come from a wide variety of political backgrounds, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my letter last week to school board trustees was a reminder to them that the discussion that we're engaged in right now in the public around this bargaining situation that we're in is really a discussion around the role of local governance in education in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We have school trustees and school board Chairs that are elected by their constituents in communities all across the province, Mr. Speaker. They have an important role to play in terms of how their communities have a voice in what education is delivered in their local communities and in their schools, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I was encouraging trustees to use their local voice and stand up for local voice against an unelected teachers' union leadership. Thank you.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's telling, and it's certainly telling that as far as I know only one school board has taken up

that minister's offer to weigh in, and that board is chaired by a Sask Party candidate.

School boards need to be fully independent to make their own decisions, not intimidated through cryptic threats in letters addressed directly to trustees by that minister. In his memo, the minister also said, "Trustees must continue to be diligent in ensuring the importance of local governance remains intact after this collective bargaining agreement and beyond."

How is that anything but a veiled threat to the existence of boards in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, I actually would like thank the Saskatchewan Rivers public school division for putting out a memo to folks in their community to communicate their board's position on our local bargaining situation, Mr. Speaker.

I would remind the member opposite and all members of this House, Mr. Speaker, that actually also on that board in Saskatchewan Rivers is the president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, who is elected by her peers to represent all 27 public, Catholic, and francophone boards around the province, Mr. Speaker.

School board trustees, about 240 of them around the province from communities that we all represent, have an important voice, Mr. Speaker, a local voice in how education is delivered. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that our local trustees are the ones who should be making these decisions, not union leadership.

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

Supports for People with Addictions

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last week Prairie Harm Reduction announced that due to capacity and funding challenges, they were forced to reduce their hours. This reduction in services will mean that hundreds of people will go without life-saving supports they need when they need it. This decision is directly related to this government's inability to provide wraparound supports for people with addictions, and it will cost lives.

In the executive director of Prairie Harm Reduction's own words, I quote, "When the safe consumption site is closed, nobody's going to be there. And that's really a scary thing to try to come to terms with."

Mr. Speaker, does the minister really believe that we can save lives when organizations like Prairie Harm Reduction are forced to deny people evidence-based life-saving services?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier this week when the member raised Prairie Harm Reduction, our government funds Prairie Harm Reduction in the amount of \$2.2 million a year, Mr. Speaker. Those funds are

going to efforts to address needs in the community, Mr. Speaker. No, they do not go to drug consumption sites because the message that our government is sending to the communities and to the people battling addiction is that there is no safe use of an illicit drug, Mr. Speaker.

We are adding addiction treatment spaces and making it easier for individuals to access those spaces, Mr. Speaker. And that is saving lives, it's healing families, and it's strengthening communities across Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 156

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 156 — *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2024*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet to enter in some brief comments on Bill No. 156, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act*. I understand this is a bill for which the main purpose is to combat the illicit tobacco sales and introduce a requirement for retailers to be licensed, Mr. Speaker.

On its face, these are aims that the official opposition is very much in agreement with. A few other interesting minor changes under this Act, including renaming of enforcement officers; provisions for anyone selling tobacco without a licence to have their stock seized; as well as prohibiting retailers from acquiring for sale, from a wholesaler without a licence, tobacco products, Mr. Speaker.

So I do look forward to hearing from my colleagues in a bit more detail on this bill, and I move to adjourn debate on Bill 156 at this time.

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. 157

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 157 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2024*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be

on my feet to enter into debate on Bill 157, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2024*. This is a bill that would maintain small-business tax rate at 1 per cent for another year and adjusting dividend tax credits to match that 1 per cent rate.

I know that many small businesses are really struggling right now. I know that there was a bit of a banding together after the pandemic and now we're seeing a lot of closures, a lot of burnout, a lot of challenges at that level, Mr. Speaker. I know I hear from a lot of small businesses in my riding that are either thinking of closing up shop or have already, Mr. Speaker.

It is really disappointing to see the lack of cost-of-living relief from this government as this is something that the official opposition has been consistent on, our calls for more help, as we see the impacts of this generational cost of living really take a toll, not just on small businesses but on working people, families. You know, I think of the surging food bank use rates, child poverty. People are really struggling just to make ends meet, living paycheque to paycheque and often having to choose which utility bill to pay this week and put the other one off to the next. I hear from families on a regular basis.

We really need to be seeing more from this government on that front. To the extent that they've introduced some balance into their budget, it's really been on the back of tax expansions, making, you know, kind of regular working people carry more and more of the load. And it's really disappointing to see.

Mr. Speaker, I do look forward to hearing from my colleagues on this bill as well, as I know the critic will be looking into it more closely. So with that, I would move to adjourn Bill 157, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2024*.

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. 158

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. J. Harrison that **Bill No. 158 — *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act, 2024*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to put a few comments on the record on Bill 158, *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act, 2024*. I won't go on for too long because there's really only a very minor change. I'm getting a thumbs-up to talk for as long as I want. I won't be long, Mr. Speaker, because it's really just a minor change, nothing big.

It raises a few questions, I think. I understand that this is simply adding an additional year to apply for this tax credit. We're at year seven, I believe now, up to year eight. I reviewed the minister's comments that it'll be reviewed at budget time next

year and determined then if an additional year will be added.

[14:30]

So I guess I would assume that this is maybe something that we'll continue to look at in this Assembly into the future, so it's a pretty small change at this time. Questions that certainly come up from me are whether or not there are organizations applying for this credit. We think it's a good idea in theory, but as far as how it's being utilized, what the uptake is, I'm not very sure of. It's hard to see the impact of it so far, but we'll leave that up to our critic to examine this in the future.

At this point I'll voice my support, but we'll continue hearing comments from colleagues in opposition as we engage with stakeholders and listen to folks impacted by this and bring questions forward at the appropriate time. But at this point, Mr. Speaker, I'll move that we adjourn debate on Bill 158.

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. 159

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 159 — *The Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act, 2024*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again it's an honour to put a few comments on the record for Bill 159, *The Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act, 2024*. And again, I reviewed the minister's comments, which were incredibly brief, and I'll venture not to say more than she did because these are, again, small changes.

Certainly, you know, we're in favour of seeing accountability for corporations not paying their taxes, and I understand that these amendments lengthen the statute of limitations as far as pursuing repayment from a board of directors who are liable for the taxes if a corporation hasn't paid, extending that time period from two to four years. So we're certainly in favour of that.

It does bring to mind how little we've heard from this government over there, nation within a nation. Saskatchewan revenue agency has all but disappeared from this government's talking points and certainly we're wondering where that went. They brought forward large sums of monies that might be used to create this agency, and it brings us back to a time when they were using taxpayer money to trot around the province holding closed-door autonomy and sovereignty meetings. And this is one of the things that it resulted in was that Saskatchewan revenue agency.

So as far as this government's intents when it comes to changing how corporate and income tax is collected, still lots of questions

there, Mr. Speaker. I won't say any more today, but I do want to hear what my colleagues have to say.

So at this time, I'll move that we adjourn debate on Bill 159.

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. 160

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. J. Harrison that **Bill No. 160** — *The Immigration Services Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to weigh in briefly here this afternoon with respect to Bill No. 160, *The Immigration Services Act*. Our critic has been engaged substantively on immigration matters and has been proposing solutions and better paths forward. And I'll leave the substance of those entries to him, Mr. Speaker.

But certainly immigration, and fair immigration and fair processes are so critical to this province, Mr. Speaker. We need to make sure those that are coming to Saskatchewan are treated fairly and that they have protections in place. And we need to make sure that we do all we can to have the conditions in place to retain those that are choosing Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

All too often what we've seen under this government is a dismal record going in the wrong direction on this front, Mr. Speaker, where in fact over the last five years, this government's retention rate of newcomers, of those choosing Saskatchewan, has plummeted. And that's in no one's interest, Mr. Speaker.

We want to make sure that we have the conditions and the economy and the jobs and the services in our classrooms and in health care in place, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we're retaining newcomers for the long term, to make sure that they can build and better their lives here in Saskatchewan and, in so doing, building and bettering Saskatchewan. A revolving door is not what we want to see here, Mr. Speaker. We want to make sure that we have an inclusive province that allows those choosing Saskatchewan to put down roots, to build good careers and livelihoods and to make sure that their little ones have the best opportunities to build opportunity here in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately with respect to immigration of late, Mr. Speaker, we've seen too many situations with very serious allegations of lack of fairness around processes, very challenging and concerning allegations on these fronts. And then a halting of programs and changing of programs on the fly without any notice. We need to make sure that we're building good programs, good security for those choosing Saskatchewan, and we need to make sure those protections are in place for those choosing our province, Mr. Speaker.

And of course, critical to that, we need the affordability that families can count on. We need the quality of life and the health services and education that people count on, and the economic opportunities and jobs for workers and local businesses that will allow them to work hard and succeed and thrive, Mr. Speaker.

With that being said, at this time, I know I'll leave our immigration critic, the member for Coronation Park, to lead the substantive entry on this legislation. We'll make sure that this legislation is as effective as it can be, Mr. Speaker. And we'll continue to push for the improvements to make sure that Saskatchewan can live up to its full potential for all the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

With that being said, I'll move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 160.

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: — In order to facilitate the work of committee this afternoon and this evening, 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 10 a.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:38.]

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