



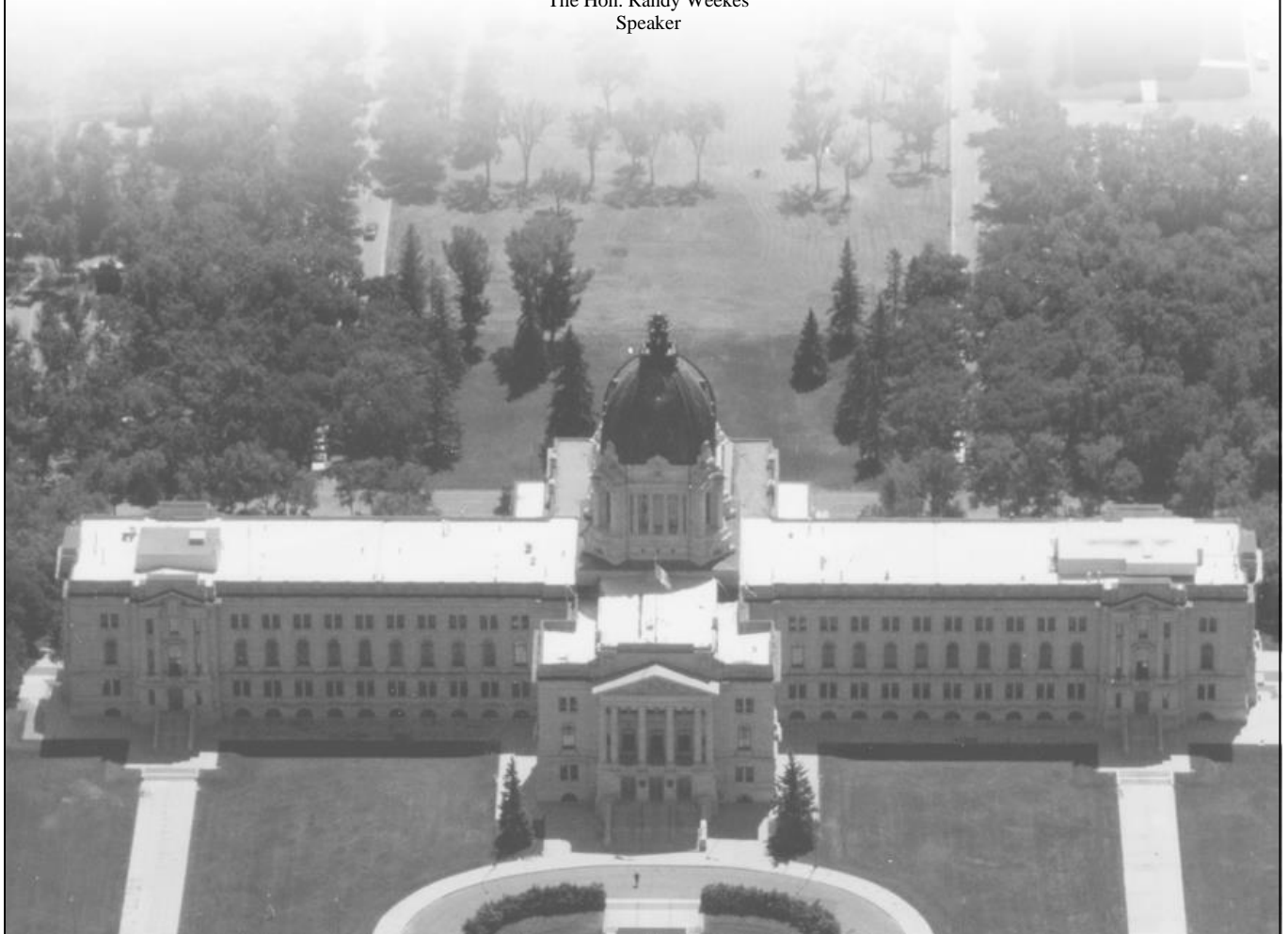
FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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) | Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP) |
| Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP) | Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP) |
| Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP) | Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP) |
| Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP) | Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP) |
| Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP) | McLeod, Blaine — Lumsden-Morse (SP) |
| Burki, Noor — Regina Coronation Park (NDP) | McLeod, Hon. Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP) |
| Carr, Hon. Lori — Estevan (SP) | McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP) |
| Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP) | Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP) |
| Clarke, Jared — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP) | Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP) |
| Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP) | Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP) |
| Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP) | Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP) |
| Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP) | Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP) |
| 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

Clerk — Iris Lang
Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel — Kenneth S. Ring, K.C.
Deputy Clerk — Kathy Burianyak
Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

Hansard on the internet
Hansard and other documents of the
Legislative Assembly are available
within hours after each sitting.

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker: — On Thursday, April 10th, 2024 the Deputy Government House Leader rose on a point of order alleging that the Leader of the Opposition indirectly accused the Premier of being dishonest in her statement “. . . Saskatchewan people expect their leaders to be honest and forthright.” The Opposition House Leader argued that the words were not out of order. I committed to reviewing the record and have since conducted a thorough review of the *Hansards* published in the past few weeks.

In my review I found many instances where members on both sides of the floor insinuated that other members were being dishonest or untrustworthy. Members will recall that in some of these cases, I asked members to withdraw and apologize for the statements.

I would direct members to Beauchesne’s, 6th Edition, which states on page 151, “It is not unparliamentary temperately to criticize statements made by Members as being contrary to the facts; but no imputation of intentional falsehood is permissible.” While proper debate may involve different interpretations of fact, members well know that impugning the honesty and integrity of other members is unparliamentary.

In determining a ruling, a Speaker must take more than just the words or phrases spoken by a member into account. As is noted in Beauchesne’s, the tone, manner, and intention of the person speaking must also be considered. Additionally, as Speaker Toth noted on December 7th, 2010:

. . . the context and use of the word is key to determining whether or not it is acceptable.

One of the acceptability tests is cited in the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 2nd edition at page 614, which is as follows: “Remarks directed specifically at another Member which question that Member’s integrity, honesty, or character are not in order.”

Over the past few weeks, in addition to insinuations of dishonesty, I also found that members on both sides of this Chamber have increasingly engaged in inflammatory and provocative statements, personal attacks, and name calling, which have caused disruption in this Chamber. Such instances were not limited to question period but could be found throughout routine proceedings, during introduction of guests, presenting petitions, and statements by members.

I would repeatedly ask members to withdraw and apologize for their conduct, yet unparliamentary behaviour persists. In the context of the escalating disorder in this Chamber and similar statements over the past few weeks, I find the point of order well taken. However given the numerous infractions on Thursday, I will not single out the Leader of the Opposition to apologize.

I would like to conclude by quoting Speaker Docherty from April 18th, 2019, page 5834 of *Hansard*:

The decorum we show in this Assembly is not merely out of respect for each other. It is instead an expression of the respect we . . . owe the constituents we represent.

Hon. members come to this Chamber to reflect diverse viewpoints and to debate alternatives. I expect all members to do so respectfully according to their Code of Ethical Conduct. When members engage in unparliamentary conduct, they are disrespectful not only to other members but to this very institution and to the people we serve.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I’d like to welcome two guests sitting in your gallery this afternoon. With us today we have two members of the council for the town of Battleford. We have Councillor Doug Laing and then Mayor Ames Leslie as well joining us today.

These two gentlemen are among a group that serve one of the municipalities that I represent — the municipality that I call home — very well in terms of serving our town’s residents and the needs of those residents each and every single day.

I’d like to just quickly give a special shout-out to Ames, who over the last year was diagnosed with cancer and has fought that cancer and, thanks to the good folks at the Battlefords Union Hospital, is working through that and continues to serve our community in many regards including as mayor.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of the House to join me in welcoming Mayor Leslie and Councillor Laing to this their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it’s a pleasure to join with the minister and welcome these two leaders from The Battlefords, Mayor Ames Leslie and Councillor Doug Laing. Thank you so much for joining us here today. Thank you for your leadership, not only to your community but to Saskatchewan and for representing the way that you do. And joining with the minister as well, we offer our care and continued best wishes as you battle, and we wish you nothing but health and healing as well to the mayor.

So we wish these two well and we wish them a very good week here in Regina over at the SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] convention. On behalf of the official opposition, it’s my pleasure to welcome them both.

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

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you this afternoon, I'd also like to join with the Minister of Education and the member opposite in welcoming Ames and Doug to their Legislative Assembly, and Doug in particular.

Doug and I have a history going back to high school. We went to high school together, and if that wasn't enough, we ended up working at the same radio station back in the early 1990s or late 1980s. The difference being he worked on one side of the wall, on the FM side; I was on the AM side. He got to play all the cool stuff like Aerosmith and the Stones, AC/DC. I got stuck with Neil Sedaka, The Bells, and Captain & Tennille.

So it's very interesting to see how our paths lined up in high school and then lined up through our broadcasting careers, and then they kind of went our separate ways. And now we're back both working in government, with Doug being municipal government and I'm in provincial government.

So Doug, you're a fantastic leader for the people of Battleford and the surrounding communities. You do great work and all your work with you and Ames is recognized, and it's good to see you here in town this week for SUMA. I look forward to seeing you again hopefully later on today or sometime this week. With that I'd like to invite all members to join me in welcoming Ames and Doug to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it's always an honour to stand here and introduce people that have served here and served with us previously. Behind the bar on our side is Rob Norris, former member for Saskatoon, also former minister.

A quick little story about Rob. It would have been shortly after we got elected, it would have been early '08. I was in the premier's office to chat with Brad and he was busy at the time. Rhonda was pretty new in the office, new in the building at the time, and so I explained that I wanted to see the premier. And she said, well I'll let him know you're here, Minister Norris. And back then Rob and I had similar haircuts, similar glasses, and we're both kind of short wheelbase, so you know, I could see the mistake being made.

So I'd ask all members to welcome Rob Norris to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, it's a pleasure to welcome Rob Norris to his Assembly. I had the privilege of serving alongside Rob in this Assembly as well. We wish him well with all of his endeavours. I think he's working with a local energy company these days. He's been active of course with the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] and the synchrotron, many other areas as well.

Around here, back in the day, Mr. Speaker, he was a bit of Norris the Thesaurus in here, Mr. Speaker. And he was an animated guy to debate with in here. We want to welcome Rob to his Assembly here today and thank him for his contributions to his province.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — 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 issuing a carve-out for home heating oil; and that the Government of Saskatchewan decision to not collect or remit the carbon tax on home heating in Saskatchewan has led to a drop in inflation; further, that despite the decision to not charge the carbon tax on home heating, Saskatchewan families continue to pay the tax out of pocket at 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 residents are from Martensville. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present the following petition.

The folks who signed this petition wish to bring to your attention the following: the Sask Party government voted against duty-to-consult legislation; Saskatchewan needs legislation to ensure the provincial duty-to-consult is fulfilled and is carried out with the honour of the Crown; the Sask Party government has never addressed cumulative impacts, yet duty-to-consult must consider cumulative effects on the ability to practise inherent and treaty rights before approving projects in Saskatchewan.

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 enshrine duty-to-consult into law by enacting meaningful duty-to-consult legislation.

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

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present our petition calling on the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to suspend the fuel tax.

The undersigned residents of the province wish to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan people are struggling to keep up with increased costs of food, shelter, and other basic necessities, as wages have not kept up with the rate of inflation;

that according to an October 2023 Angus Reid poll, more than one-third of people in Saskatchewan are struggling with the cost of living; and that the Saskatchewan Party government could follow other jurisdictions such as Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, and Newfoundland in providing immediate cost-of-living relief to Saskatchewan families by suspending the 15-cent-per-litre provincial gas tax.

Mr. Speaker, I will 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 suspend the collection of the provincial fuel tax from gasoline and diesel for a period of six months to help families struggling with the high cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, the undersigned residents reside in Prince Albert. I do so present.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling on the government to immediately address the doctor shortage in Rosthern and Duck Lake. The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: that emergency services at the Rosthern Hospital continue to experience closures due to a shortage of doctors, and that nearly 1,000 people in Duck Lake, Rosthern, and the surrounding area are without a doctor. This is in the Premier's backyard, Mr. Speaker. You'd think they'd be able to find solutions in that constituency, but folks are struggling to get access to that primary care.

I'll 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 immediately recruit and retain doctors to provide adequate and accessible health care to Rosthern, Duck Lake, and the surrounding area.

The signatories today reside in Rosthern. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Innovator in Mining Sector Celebrates 25 Years in Saskatchewan

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A milestone anniversary is being marked by a company that introduced vital mining technology and methods to Saskatchewan.

[13:45]

The company known as Thyssen Mining came from Germany to set up headquarters in Regina and incorporated in Canada 60 years ago in May. It remains headquartered in Regina and has grown to be a world leader in building underground mines. Thyssen Mining's work is why potash mines could be built in

this province. They use well-developed ground freezing technology and cast iron shaft liners which were new to North America.

Nine out of the ten potash shafts in Saskatchewan were completed by Thyssen Mining working as shaft sinking contractor in the 1960s and '70s. Thyssen went on to establish itself in the uranium sector, completing all underground mine development for uranium mines in Saskatchewan since 1983. As they diversified it established joint ventures and partnerships including Mudjatik Thyssen Mining. It has proven for more than 25 years to be a highly successful model for First Nations communities to participate in economic development opportunities with northern Saskatchewan uranium mines.

On behalf of the Legislative Assembly, thank you to Thyssen Mining for continuing to contribute to Saskatchewan's economy. Thank you.

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

New Local Coffee Shops Open in Regina and Saskatoon

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am always excited to hear of new small businesses opening in Saskatchewan. And for those who know me, I love supporting local coffee shops. Mr. Speaker, two new coffee shops have opened their doors in Saskatchewan and I encourage folks in both of our largest cities to take time to support them.

In Saskatoon Chef Tazsia Thakur and her husband, Karan, co-owners behind long-standing restaurant Calories, have opened a new cafe in downtown Saskatoon called Pique which will offer coffee, sandwiches, pastries, bread, and so many of the unique creations Calories has been known for for years. I know Pique will be a fixture of Saskatoon downtown for years to come. In fact I wrote this member statement sitting in their new cafe.

In Regina another coffee shop has taken root. Pause Coffee started as a company offering beans and brewing equipment right to your door during the pandemic when our favourite coffee shops were closed. Pause Coffee, owned by Alayne and Jason Dubord, are excited to be opening a permanent coffee shop location in Regina's Cathedral neighbourhood. Pause is partnering with Somethin' Sweet Desserts for an amazing baked goods selection, and turned to Kustom Kitties for some of the furniture and fit-ups. Pause is community focused and equity driven, both in their sourcing practices and locally.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in congratulating both Pique cafe and Pause Coffee on their openings in Saskatoon and Regina. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association's Annual Convention

Mr. Lemaigre: — SUMA Convention 2024 has begun and will run from Sunday to Wednesday this week. This important event provides us with a unique opportunity to connect with and listen directly to the voices of urban municipalities across

Saskatchewan. I'm proud to say our Premier gave his address at the convention this morning.

Since 1906 SUMA has been hosting its annual convention, and this year it will bring together over 1,000 delegates to meet and discuss the futures of our towns, cities, and villages, as well as the challenges associated with a rapidly growing province. Our government will be there, connecting with delegates through the meetings, dialogue sessions, and the famed bear pit.

Mr. Speaker, our government is incredibly proud of the work we have done with our municipalities. The '24-25 budget provides nearly \$557 million in direct support for municipalities across the province. This includes a record investment of 340 million into no-strings-attached municipal revenue sharing, so your communities can build for success and growth. Mr. Speaker, that's 167 per cent increase in revenue sharing from 2007-2008. A total of \$4.3 billion has been allocated directly to municipalities.

I would ask all members join me in thanking everyone involved in organizing this year's SUMA convention as well as recognizing the dedication our municipal partners bring to serving the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Government's Economic Record

Ms. A. Young: — Why, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last week we raised another example of this tired and out-of-touch government's abysmal economic record. Mr. Speaker, we are losing both head offices and head office jobs — fact.

Now if the members opposite won't believe me, if they don't believe Statistics Canada, will they believe one of their friends? I want to read directly from a short article released by Saskatchewan's own Paul Martin, and I quote, "Saskatchewan has fewer head offices than five years ago. It's a metric that is important in measuring the potency of an economy." He goes on:

We have 79 major head offices located here, down about 8 per cent in the previous five years. The number of people working in Saskatchewan head offices fell almost 15 per cent in the most recent five years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that this government hates to talk about their record which, to be clear, is Canada's worst jobs record, a 20 per cent drop in immigrant retention, 6 out of 10 people worried about paying their bills, and paycheques that just ain't keeping up with the tax and utility hikes under this government.

It's clear why they refuse to live in the now because their record is abysmal. The best they can do is point to a policy choice from a government 50 years ago. Mr. Speaker, that'd be like me accusing this government for being responsible for the 12 criminal acts from the Devine government that they were convicted of.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they may be bad at history, but one thing we know for sure is this government is no slouch at Sask Party math.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Annual Women Breaking Barriers Conference Empowers Saskatchewan Women

Ms. C. Young: — Mr. Speaker, last Thursday the second annual Women Breaking Barriers Conference took place right here in the Queen City at the Saskatchewan Science Centre. This conference is about empowering women to advance in their careers and acknowledging the contribution women make to our economy. The Government of Saskatchewan is proud to be a sponsor, providing \$25,000, continuing our commitment of empowering women to live safe, healthy, and prosperous lives.

This year's presenters featured women from a variety of sectors to share insights, experiences, and strategies to advance leadership potential while also offering networking and mentorship opportunities. The leadership panel had a focus on the women spearheading our Crown corporations, including Penny McCune, president and CEO [chief executive officer] of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance]; Charlene Gavel, president and CEO of SaskTel; Susan Flett, president and CEO of Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan; Kathryn Pollack, VP [vice-president], SaskPower; and Rhea Brown, VP, SaskPower.

The conference was livestreamed to 25 satellite and micro satellite locations throughout the province, bringing together diverse women from rural, urban, and northern communities. Our government is committed to advancing the status of women by providing opportunities that enable women to thrive and contribute to Saskatchewan's communities' well-being and economic success for years to come. Thank you.

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

Saskatchewan and France to Develop Supply Chains for Critical Minerals

Mr. Jenson: — Mr. Speaker, this morning the Minister of Trade and Export Development met with French Minister Riester, delegate for foreign trade, to mark the beginning of a new partnership. Saskatchewan and France have signed a new letter of intent on the development of supply chains for strategic minerals. Saskatchewan is home to 23 critical minerals, including uranium, potash, lithium, helium, and many more. This agreement will focus on improving supply chain security and sustainability along with the research and development for critical minerals.

During his remarks, the French minister referred to Saskatchewan as "the new frontier," and commended the province as one of the most developed jurisdictions in the world for sustainable resource development.

Our government recognizes the vital importance of our mining sector. The same cannot be said for the members opposite. They consistently talk down our trade missions and the provincial resource industry. And they have no plan for how they would grow the economy and develop new international partnerships. Their only economic plan would annihilate trade offices, isolate Saskatchewan from international markets, and crash our economy.

By opposing our resource sector, the members opposite continue to show us exactly who they are. And we believe them. Our government will continue to grow and invest in our mining sector because we know the NDP won't. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Opposition Position on Carbon Tax

Mr. Francis: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP wonder why they have no credibility on the carbon tax. It's because Canadians have a hard time understanding their position. And that was demonstrated again last week by their federal leader, Jagmeet Singh. In a speech to the Broadbent Institute on Thursday, Singh surprised a lot of people, including his boss, Justin Trudeau, by saying the NDP no longer support the consumer carbon tax.

But of course, Mr. Speaker, that didn't last very long. Now we don't know if he received thousands of calls from upset NDP members or just one call from his boss, Justin Trudeau. But either way, less than 24 hours later, the NDP issued a statement backpedalling on their backpedalling saying they have not changed their position and they still in fact support the Trudeau carbon tax. Confusing, yes; strangely similar to the NDP here in Saskatchewan, a party desperately and unsuccessfully, I might add, trying to distance themselves from the carbon tax because we know so many of their members still support one.

Mr. Speaker, there is one party in this province that was against the Trudeau carbon tax since day one and every day since then. And we will continue to stand up for Saskatchewan families against the carbon tax until it is removed on everything for everyone. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Cost of Living and Affordability

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people continue to fall further and further behind under this tired and out-of-touch government. Fifty-seven per cent of people struggling to pay their grocery bills. Six thousand jobs lost last month. Fewer head office jobs and fewer head offices here in Saskatchewan today than when that Premier took office.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people need a break, but that Premier is failing to deliver. Why is the Premier refusing to deliver the cost-of-living relief that Saskatchewan families need? And why won't he cut the fuel tax to deliver that break that struggling families desperately need him to make?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, yet again I would point the Leader of the Opposition one more time to pages 75 and 76 of the budget, Mr. Speaker, where in three out of four income categories Regina, Saskatchewan is deemed the most affordable place in Canada to live.

Mr. Speaker, it goes on here. Let's go to a few media articles. CTV News on March the 1st of this year reported in a title, Mr.

Speaker, as I quote, "Regina's affordable housing market is piquing the interest of buyers from across Canada." Mr. Speaker, just prior to that in February 28th, CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] also had this headline, Mr. Speaker. Again I quote, "Regina ranked as the most affordable city in Canada to purchase a single-family home."

Mr. Speaker, we continue, through the strength of a strong and prosperous economy, to attract people to live in our communities, which are wholly affordable relative to other places across Canada. And we can get into those comparisons, Mr. Speaker. And we continue to work to attract not only head offices, Mr. Speaker, but to attract industries to invest in this province, Mr. Speaker.

What we see with the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, is again saying one thing, do another, as the NDP's head office is actually Jagmeet Singh's office in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker.

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

Health Care Staffing and Usage of Hyperbaric Chamber

Ms. Beck: — That's a look, Mr. Speaker, from a Premier who's failing to deliver the cost-of-living relief that Saskatchewan families need. And he's also failing to deliver when it comes to health care that Saskatchewan families can count on.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today we were joined by Moose Jaw firefighters calling on this government to restore service to the hyperbaric chamber. Firefighters raised almost a million dollars to get the hyperbaric chamber built in the first place, but now it's serving only one patient while all others have to go out of province for the care they need.

What does the Premier say to firefighters who have worked so hard to get this facility built, only to see Saskatchewan patients turned away?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, first and foremost I would say thank you to those firefighters in Moose Jaw for not only the job they do each and every day running towards danger, while we, the rest of us, quite often find ourselves running a different direction, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to them.

Thank you, and I remember the discussions around the construction of the Wigmore Hospital in Moose Jaw, the discussions that we had, the previous minister of Health, Mr. Speaker with the firefighters from Moose Jaw on their fundraising campaign to ensure that the Wigmore Hospital, new Wigmore Hospital did include a hyperbaric chamber, Mr. Speaker. That commitment was made by this government at that point in time, and that commitment to operate that hyperbaric chamber remains true today, Mr. Speaker.

And it's my understanding — and this has not been mentioned by the members opposite — that there is a requirement for four respiratory therapists to service the full scope of hours that that hyperbaric chamber would like to offer. Three of those respiratory therapists have been secured, Mr. Speaker, which is resulting in reduced service but a service that is being provided

to — which I think was delivered in committee the other day — two individuals that are utilizing the chamber or need to utilize the chamber in the near future, Mr. Speaker.

Upon the successful recruitment of a fourth respiratory therapist, Mr. Speaker, full services will resume.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Premier that the people of Moose Jaw and the Moose Jaw firefighters remember that story just a little bit different from the one that the Premier just told. But the Moose Jaw firefighters are not the only ones who are frustrated by this government's failures with the hyperbaric chamber.

[14:00]

Brayden Dutchak joins us here today in the west gallery. Brayden's mom is a cancer survivor who relies on the hyperbaric chamber for the care that she needs. And he has been a tireless and effective advocate for his mom, and she's now able to access that chamber. And, Mr. Speaker, that is a good thing, but because of the chronic short-staffing, she's the only person in the province who is able to do so.

And Brayden wants this chamber to be available to everyone who needs it to have access to this life-saving care. What does the Premier have to say to Bryden?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — First of all, I would welcome Brayden to his Legislative Assembly and thank him for his advocacy on behalf of health care services not only being offered to the community of Moose Jaw but — I think they're the only hyperbaric chamber in Saskatchewan — health care services that are made available to all Saskatchewan residents.

It's my understanding that the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, who also serves as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for the community of Moose Jaw, has been in contact with Brayden, Mr. Speaker. And I would say this to Brayden: he is right. We didn't invest in the hyperbaric chamber within the new Wigmore Hospital with the intent of not operating it to its full capacity, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there has been some challenges, some human resource challenges. And I would say those challenges are not only exclusive to the province of Saskatchewan, but those are across Canada, Mr. Speaker. And what you have seen is one of the most ambitious health human resource action plans put in place in this province that is ensuring, Mr. Speaker, that today we are able to offer three of the respiratory therapists offering that service in the community of Moose Jaw, with every intent to secure a fourth respiratory therapist and make that service available as it was intended to be, Mr. Speaker, when we made the commitment to build the facility.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, sadly this is what Saskatchewan people have come to expect from this tired and out-of-touch

government. They lurch from crisis to crisis but consistently fail to get to the root cause of the problem in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, with the hyperbaric chamber, as with so many other issues in health care, the root cause is short-staffing. We need to hire more health care workers, and we need to end the culture of burnout and disrespect that drives health care staff from the profession and the province in the first place. We need a grow-your-own solution to plan, to retain and train Saskatchewan health care workers to give care to Saskatchewan people.

When will the Premier recognize that the health care staffing plan is not working and start listening to the solutions that are coming from health care workers in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I was drawing quite the comparison in my mind. I was elected to this Assembly on behalf of the people of Rosthern-Shellbrook in 2011, Mr. Speaker. Prior to that I worked within my community as a health care advocate recruiting physicians at that point in time, of which our province had become desperately low on, Mr. Speaker.

I remember the conversations I'd had then, newly elected, with the then minister of Health — the member from Indian Head-Milestone; today, Mr. Speaker, our Minister of Government Relations — and the revamp of the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, the expansion from 60 physician training seats to 100, the expansion of the residency positions, Mr. Speaker, from 60 to 120.

We've seen since that, Mr. Speaker, the doubling of nurse training seats in our institutions, the addition of psychiatric nurse training seats, of which the members opposite actually got rid of here in the province, Mr. Speaker. And now you're seeing the significant expansion of nurse practitioner training seats, the expansion of scope for them to operate within our communities, Mr. Speaker.

We are not about to take any lessons, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to health human resource action plans from the members opposite because their action plan was to fire nurses, to fire physicians, Mr. Speaker, and send our kids to Alberta because they closed their hospital.

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

Mr. Clarke: — I'll just remind the Premier, 53 hospital closures under his watch as Premier. That's the fact. You know, it's a good thing that Brayden's mom is able to get the care at the hyperbaric chamber, but it's a crying shame that nobody else in Saskatchewan can because of the short-staffing crisis that this government has created.

Health care workers are not being heard by this tired and out-of-touch government, and it's long past time that the Sask Party take responsibility for the damage that they have done. Will the minister do that today? It's been three years, Mr. Speaker. When will the hyperbaric chamber in Moose Jaw be fully operational for all of Saskatchewan people?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Premier said in his previous answer, we are aware through the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] that there are two patients in Saskatchewan seeking treatment at the hyperbaric chamber. One is currently receiving that treatment and the other, to our understanding, Mr. Speaker, is meeting with their physician to build a treatment plan to receive treatment at the hyperbaric chamber.

Mr. Speaker, as the Premier said, we require a fourth respiratory therapist. That position is being recruited as we speak, Mr. Speaker. And once recruited, we're anxious and excited to see that services at the Moose Jaw hyperbaric chamber fully resume. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Mr. Speaker, the government has said that the hyperbaric chamber is closed. No physicians know it's closed, so why would they refer patients to the closed hyperbaric chamber? Patients are going out of province to get this care right now.

Their plan isn't working. If it was, the firefighters wouldn't have joined us today to say that more needs to be done. If it was working, Brayden wouldn't be here saying that more needs to be done. Chronic short-staffing and burnout is driving health care workers out of our province, and it's forcing patients out of our province too.

Does the minister think it's acceptable for the hyperbaric chamber to be providing care to only one patient while some in Saskatchewan go to Alberta and the rest go without care?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member, who are the rest? We are aware of two patients that are seeking treatment from the hyperbaric chamber. One is currently receiving those treatments, and I thank Brayden for joining us here today. He has been a tireless advocate for services for his mother. And as the Premier indicated, I was happy to have correspondence together with Brayden about the situation.

Mr. Speaker, we are seeking a fourth respiratory therapist and, as soon as that individual is recruited, we will gladly see the services of the Moose Jaw hyperbaric chamber fully resumed. Thank you.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people expect the care that they need to be there when and where they need it. But this tired and out-of-touch government has broken our health care system, and they're not the ones up to fix it. They've had six years under this Premier to do it and they have failed. It's time for a change, Mr. Speaker.

Does the Minister of Health take any responsibility for the mess

the Sask Party has made to our health care system?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government's health human resources action plan is one of the most ambitious plans in the country, if not the most ambitious, Mr. Speaker.

If the members opposite had spent a little more time listening and a little bit less time talking, they would have heard all of the positive results that we are seeing from the health human resources action plan, Mr. Speaker. Just last week we announced 232 new and enhanced full-time positions have been filled in the rural and remote areas, Mr. Speaker. More than 300 physicians are now working through our SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment] program, Mr. Speaker. One hundred and eighteen applications have been approved through the rural physician incentive program for up to \$200,000, Mr. Speaker. We have 300 new full-time CCAs [continuing care aide] working in this province, Mr. Speaker. This plan is working and the results can be seen all across our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Contract with Private Company for Provision of Surgeries

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have serious doubts about how those answers are going to go over with the people of Moose Jaw in the upcoming election, but I guess we'll see, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan people wait longer than anywhere else in Canada for knee and hip replacements. It was that way before this government gave a major Sask Party donor a sweetheart deal to perform these procedures in Calgary, and it was that way after this government gave a major Sask Party donor a sweetheart deal to perform these procedures in Calgary. Worst in the nation, Mr. Speaker.

So I'd like the minister to walk us through his thought process. Why did this tired and out-of-touch government give a Calgary-based Sask Party donor a sole-source contract valued at \$6 million just so we could still be last in the nation? Why not put that money into building up Saskatchewan hospitals, Saskatchewan health care workers, building capacity here at home? And did the former Finance minister, Kevin Doherty, have anything to do with it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is committed to pursuing all options when it comes to improving access to joint-replacement surgeries for patients in our province, Mr. Speaker. That includes some of these being done out of province, as we've talked about earlier, Mr. Speaker, in this Chamber.

But in addition to that, further to the member's question, we are also making significant investments, record investments into

surgeries and surgical capacity here in this province. As I've said before, nearly \$670 million into doing more surgeries here in our province, supporting our surgical teams and networks across Saskatchewan, in Saskatoon and Regina and our regional centres, that perform surgeries for people right across this province.

We're going to continue to make sure that we look at doing everything we can to make sure that patients get the surgeries they need on a timely basis, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the Health minister can't keep his story straight, and we need to only look to his words for proof.

First he said in here there was an RFP [request for proposal], a "open, transparent process," a competition for this contract. From *Hansard* he also said, and I quote, "It's my understanding that Mr. Doherty did not lobby on this, was not involved in this particular RFP."

Then he said out there it was a sole-source contract, but don't worry. Apparently SaskBuilds and Procurement looked into other firms, and this Sask Party donor was the only option.

Prove it. Will the Health minister release the SaskBuilds and Procurement records? Yes or no?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member's question, and first of all, I will say this. I made a correction as soon as I could that day, that afternoon, 10 minutes after the proceedings in the Chamber, Mr. Speaker, when talking to the media. And I made a further clarification the following day, Mr. Speaker.

Now I would say this. As I mentioned last week, the chief procurement officer for SaskBuilds had been consulted on this particular initiative and was satisfied that this was the appropriate course of action to take, Mr. Speaker. Because of the nature of it, Mr. Speaker, we were looking to do everything we could to address the wait-list of those that are waiting for surgeries, known as the long-waiters on the surgical waiting lists that have built up over the course of the pandemic, Mr. Speaker.

Since that point in time, we've made significant progress in reducing those numbers, shortening the waiting list, shortening the waiting times. Still work to do, Mr. Speaker. We're committed to getting that done so people can get their surgeries on time, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, this is why people are fed up. First the minister said former Sask Party MLA and former Finance minister-turned-lobbyist Kevin Doherty was never in the picture. Then he admitted to meeting with Doherty but about something else, but he can't remember about what. And later when pressed by reporters for specifics, the minister said he's had so many meetings he just can't recall what they were about.

He's had the weekend to look through his call and meeting logs. To the minister: since Kevin Doherty started lobbying him in May 2022, did he ever speak to him? Did he ever exchange emails with him? Did he ever meet with him about the surgical backlog? Yes or no?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This member opposite, she has quite a track record, Mr. Speaker, of the things that she says in this House. Mr. Speaker, the character assassinations that she issues in this House, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — That's out of order, Minister. That's out of order. Go ahead, but just warning you.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The lobbyists registry is a list of registered lobbyists who have made an application to the registry to be able to lobby politicians, to be able to lobby MLAs on this side of the House and on that side of the House. Just because a lobbyist is listed on the registry does not necessarily mean, Mr. Speaker, that they have met with MLAs.

Mr. Speaker, I could point to the member opposite, her own record. For example, I think she has multiple entries there on the lobbyists registry of meeting with a tobacco company. Did she meet with them? I don't know, Mr. Speaker. So I would say this, Mr. Speaker: it's important to be clear about what the lobbyists registry is and what it isn't, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, people don't want to see him pointing fingers. They want to make sure his hands are on the wheel. First there was no RFP. Then there wasn't. First there was no meeting. Then there were several meetings, but 100 per cent definitely about something else other than this, but he can't recall what.

But here's one thing the Health minister was half right about, Mr. Speaker. On Thursday he said, ". . . the Minister of Health does not sign contracts. The Minister of Health, we don't do that." Well technically that's correct, Mr. Speaker. It's the Premier who signed the order in council authorizing the \$6 million sweetheart deal. I have a copy right here.

[14:15]

So is the Health minister blaming the Premier for signing this dodgy donor deal with Doherty?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Health minister.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Due to, as I mentioned before, due to a slowdown in non-urgent procedures during the pandemic and non-essential health care services, certain procedures and health care services were slowed down. That includes surgeries, Mr. Speaker, to at which point it actually reached about 36,000 people waiting for surgeries in the middle of the pandemic as a result of surgical slowdowns, Mr. Speaker.

We continue to make significant progress reducing that, the vast majority of these procedures being done in this province, but also utilizing other options to make sure that we can get long-waiters who are waiting for whether it's hip surgeries or knee surgeries — through this example here, through Clearpoint in Calgary, Mr. Speaker — giving them options to be able to get those surgeries done, Mr. Speaker. We've now reduced that wait-list significantly. We're going to continue to make those investments, Mr. Speaker, so we can get these surgeries completed.

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

Emergency Hotel Stays Paid by Social Services

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, there's more questions than answers with this sole-sourced contract. But there are still no answers when it comes to the Thriftlodge motel. On Thursday, the Sask Party ordered its response to my question on that issue. That means instead of exercising their option to answer it today, they're going to kick it down the road six months.

What were those questions, you may ask, Mr. Speaker? "To the Minister of Social Services, the amount of money the ministry paid out to the Thriftlodge Motel . . . in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023." It doesn't get any simpler than that.

How does the Sask Party justify delaying the answer to these six numbers six months from now?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, we've been over this many times. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite asked for some information late last year. A lot of work was undertaken by the ministry to get that information. There was a subsequent ask of more information, Mr. Speaker. That number and those numbers that were asked for by the member are coming very shortly. That's something I've committed to, Mr. Speaker.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, we've made some improvements or changes to our procurement policy in terms of getting quotes and as well as an RFP process for a block of hotel rooms in Regina and Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker.

There's going to be a opportunity for even more questions this afternoon in estimates, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to that process.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, unacceptable. There are nearly 2,000 people that work for that ministry. There are dozens of political staff for the Sask Party in this building alone. Surely it shouldn't take weeks and weeks and months and months for the Minister of Social Services to provide basic information about public dollars being paid out to hotels connected to Sask Party hotels. Plus, his colleague sits in this Chamber; they literally share an office. He doesn't even have to pick up the phone. He can just walk down the hallway and ask him.

These guys are so lost, Mr. Speaker. They're losing their starting lineup. They're limping from crisis to crisis, mess to mess, and this mess stinks. How much longer will people have to wait before the minister shines some sunlight on this waste of public dollars?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, the member won't have to wait very long at all, Mr. Speaker. In terms of smear volume 2, Mr. Speaker, totally ignored your admonition at the beginning of this sitting day, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of thousands of public employees, Mr. Speaker, dedicated public employees in the public service, is she suggesting in the Ministry of Social Services that we pull off from front-line child care protection, Mr. Speaker? Is that what she's talking about today?

She's asking me to use the public service front-line caseworkers, child protection workers, bring them all into Regina to get the information for a public smear campaign, a political vendetta, by that member, Mr. Speaker. That is the worst idea I've ever heard. I've heard a lot of bad ones from the NDP, but that's right at the top.

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

Overdose Deaths and Treatment for Addictions

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the first three months of 2024, 113 people died of suspected overdose. It's a shocking number. It's one a day, more than one a day, Mr. Speaker — one mother, one father, a sister, a brother dying every single day this year.

Mr. Speaker, we need more than talking points and blame-casting to fix this crisis. We need solutions. We need to get people into treatment, and we need to keep people alive long enough to get there. Mr. Speaker, when will we see an evidence-based plan from that minister to stop the record-setting overdose deaths in our province?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, on this side of the House, we agree that action needs to be taken to address mental health and addictions, and that's why we introduced an action plan on mental health and addictions in October of 2023, Mr. Speaker.

Since that time we have made announcements that directly impact individuals who are battling addiction, Mr. Speaker. We have introduced a provincial drug alert system. We have overdose outreach teams. We have a free naloxone take-home kit program that has trained more than 40,000 individuals to administer naloxone. And with that program, Mr. Speaker, 10,000 overdoses have been reversed. That's 10,000 lives saved in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

The member opposite speaks about treatment. Absolutely we

need individuals to reach treatment, and that's why we are more than doubling the number of treatment spaces that we are offering in this province. We are making it easier for individuals to access those treatment spaces, Mr. Speaker. And when they are there, Mr. Speaker, we are wrapping supports around them through recovery-oriented systems of care so that we can save lives, heal families, and build stronger communities. 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 Saskatoon Eastview.

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to be on my feet to put a few comments on the record today in the debate on Bill 156, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act* of 2024.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we're all aware — at least we should be, I think — in this Assembly on the damaging impacts that tobacco use can have. We know the impacts in terms of our health, on individuals, on families, on communities, incredible cost that comes with that both in terms of the human cost and the financial costs in our health system. We should all be well versed in those matters.

So with that in mind I do stand in support of regulating the sale of tobacco products, and I think it's good to see some of these amendments that are coming in with Bill 156. In particular the introduction of a licence that anybody who wants to sell tobacco products, whether that's retail, wholesale, resale, and that folks can't acquire for retail from a wholesaler without a licence. So regulating that flow of tobacco products as they get to consumers I think is a positive sign.

Certainly there's lots to consider here, but I want to note just a couple of things. As someone who has spent a lot of time as a teacher in the classroom, the need to consider changes to the regulation of vaping products is certainly something that I support as well. I know that it's a trend that — at least with, I think, the most recent information any of us have — a trend that's still on the rise and certainly impacting young people.

And we know that somebody who gets introduced to vaping is, while in itself is damaging, can also be a way to increase their use of tobacco products. So again I think that the regulation of this through legislation at the provincial level is something that we've offered bipartisan support for.

I want to give some credit to young people in the province that have raised concerns in particular about vaping and the

Youth4Change movement. And several of these young people have come here to their Assembly to make their case; that's been powerful in the past.

And so again, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to regulating tobacco through these changes, I do stand in support but will listen with interest as my colleagues in opposition put comments on the record and eventually it comes to our critic to raise more questions in the future. But at this time I will move that we adjourn debate on Bill 156, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act*. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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 Saskatoon Eastview.

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is bill two of two for me today in adjourned debates and happy to again put a few remarks on the record here for Bill 157, *The Income Tax Amendment Act* of 2024.

In summary, off the top I do think it's important that we maintain this low tax rate for small businesses. We know that many small businesses continue to feel the impact of recovering from several years that were very hard on small businesses, small businesses that are so important in all the communities that we represent in the 61 seats in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

We all know these folks well. These small business operators are often pillars of our communities. They donate to local organizations. They volunteer. They provide so many goods and services that we all know to be important in our communities. And so I think it is a good call to maintain that low tax rate, I believe for one more year with a restoration date of July 1st, 2025 according to this amendment.

While we think it's important to provide this extended relief and support for small businesses, we also recognize that many families in Saskatchewan have not seen the support that they need to address the cost-of-living crisis. We know that families — it's been well canvassed in this Assembly — are struggling to afford healthy food for their homes, for their children. We know that 57 per cent of people in Saskatchewan recognize that they're worse off now than they were a year ago. And we think that people and families need relief too.

But with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I'll voice my support for these amendments but continue to look forward to comments throughout the debate on Bill No. 157 from my colleagues in opposition and anyone who is going to join in on this debate. But at this time, I'll move that we adjourn debate today for Bill 157,

The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2024. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Just while I'm on my feet, as Speaker, I have received literally hundreds and hundreds of text messages from the Government House Leader, the Deputy Government House Leader, and occasionally from the Minister of Finance.

I'd just like to read into the record what the Minister of Finance just sent me:

Randy, if you can blatantly lie, tarnish reputations of elected, unelected individuals with innuendoes but no proof, we have no avenue to push back, then this Assembly has become a joke and a stage for an opposition puppet show. Disappointing.

First of all, if you want to make a point of order, get on your feet. And I ask the Minister of Finance to withdraw and apologize for this text and any others that you may feel inclined to send me off the record.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I withdraw and apologize.

The Speaker: — Go ahead, Kathy.

Deputy Clerk: — Government orders, adjourned debates, item no. 3. Resume debate on the second reading motion for Bill No. 158, *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act* . . .

The Speaker: — I ask the Government House Leader to stand and withdraw and apologize for that comment too. I'm not deaf.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — I'm not.

The Speaker: — Mr. Jeremy Harrison, I hereby name you for disregarding the authority of the Chair. Pursuant to rule 57(2), the member is suspended from the service of the Assembly for the remainder of the sitting day.

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.]

[14:30]

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

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour and pleasure to be on my feet to be a part of the debate on Bill 158, Saskatchewan commercial innovation incentive, patent, amendment Act, 2024.

We all know about that. We can get talent into our province by

encouraging them with somehow, some way, by credit and recognizing their research in our province. And it is the key thing to attract people, research-oriented people, into our province. So I will say that it is a really good one, and the bill is saying about that the credit should be given from seven years to eight years. I will say we have to increase more than that because we have to encourage talented people into our province.

Personally I will tell you one of my good friends, he was with me at university back home, he did an IT [information technology] masters over there and he went to Germany for doing his Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] in Germany. When I moved over here in 2008 to Saskatchewan, he came along with me as well, as a friend, but he got a job at SGI.

When he got a job at SGI he did a lot of innovation things over there, but due to IT there was not having a lot of infrastructure as we have in Ontario, so unfortunately he moved to Ontario and right now he is doing a lot of patents, and he has done a lot of research, and he is doing . . . [inaudible] . . . great job over here.

While we think over here in our province — we are an agriculture province — we have to attract people, research people that are doing research in agriculture, in mining, to make sure that they can have to do research. And they do their patents and we have to give them the credit, the maximum that we can do it, to make sure we can retain people over here.

And, Mr. Speaker, I was reading a book. I don't know how authentic that book was; it was saying that Elon Musk at one time was in Moose Jaw. I wish we could have encouraged him to stay over here. We would be the best person . . . [inaudible] . . . over here and we would be more renowned for that.

So these are all the things that attracting people, so I will be passing on that for further debate to the member for critic, so he will be looking into that in depth. With that I will adjourn the debate for now on Bill 158. Thank you.

The Speaker: — 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 Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure and honour to stand on my feet on Bill 159, *The Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act, 2024*.

We all know that the government, all government's run by taxes. People should have to pay taxes. Corporate companies have to pay taxes. And it is not acceptable for any company that they are

not paying taxes. So we make sure that we can go for some kind of plan to make sure, if they are having trouble or something like that, we are not putting them to the corner as well.

And at the end of the day, the businesses in our province, they are providing jobs and they are providing a lot of incentive to people, and that's what our province should be. So for that purpose, we have to make sure we can give them as much as we can do that, but definitely our province is run by those taxes. So I will say I'm in favour of that, that we should have to chase those people. And whatever incentive or whatever things can be done, we have to be taking care of that.

On the top of that, we have to be looking into the accountability as well. Everybody is responsible for that. Big corporate companies, directors, and all those people, they are in there. If there is any payable remittance or any credits to government, they have to pay in time. And if some companies can't do that, just in case something happens, the government have to go with a plan.

The critic will be taking in-depth look into this bill. So with that I would return debate on Bill 159, *The Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act, 2024*. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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 Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to be on my feet today entering into adjourned debates on Bill No. 160, *The Immigration Services Act*. Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation coming before our Chamber, an important piece of legislation that will continue to ensure the greatest integrity of Saskatchewan's role in our country's immigration system.

Mr. Speaker, the integrity of our immigration system should be a priority for every level of government. And I think that Saskatchewan people will be very, very happy to see that we as a province are taking steps to ensure that our immigration system is serving the people who are looking to access it, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we can look to say that Canada is a nation of immigrants. We are probably, you know, one of the nations of the world that does this the best. We have built our nation by welcoming people to our country for opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and I am so proud to be standing in my place and speaking to a piece of legislation that will further that work here in this House, Mr. Speaker.

Now I won't talk for too long on Bill No. 160, but you know, for the folks watching at home I think it's important to see some of the important pieces of this legislation. It has a lot of ways that we are, as the government is proposing, to tighten up those systems. It talks about, you know, everything from anyone recruiting foreign workers must have a licence, you know, unless they're doing it for free or for a government association. So if you're, you know, a private entity looking to profit from recruiting immigration, you must secure a licence; you must have reputability. You know, we see in this Act clauses that the ministry can provide those licences or certificates or they can deny and revoke those certificates based on non-compliance, financial insecurity, or illegal predatory conduct, Mr. Speaker.

You know, there's also a list of what recruiters and consultants and employees cannot do. You can't lie about jobs. You can't threaten the worker or their family. You can't keep their passport. You can't charge lien or wages on the worker for them to get the job. You can't force a worker to go through a recruiter, etc. Mr. Speaker, important line-by-line for this legislation. Contracts have to be clear and understandable to the worker. The ministry has full investigation powers.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, but these are important parts of this legislation. You know, Mr. Speaker, as I've said, it's very important and it's nice to see the government put forward legislation that is protecting, aiming to protect vulnerable foreign workers.

You know, Mr. Speaker, on that note though, I think it's important that while we're talking about important regulations as far as immigration standards in our province, we play a role with the Sask immigrant nominee program in a larger immigration system that is a federal responsibility, but we have that role in it. I would really like to have the conversation in this Chamber about retaining those immigrants that we're bringing into the province, Mr. Speaker. And I'm going to look at some rates here that we've seen under five years of the Sask Party government as it relates to immigrant retention rates.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's five-year immigration retention rate has dropped to 57.9 per cent. That was from nearly — the last five years before that — 74 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that is the third-worst immigration retention rate in the country. The previous five-year rate was the fourth-worst immigration retention rate in the country. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan now loses 42 of every 100 immigrants coming to Saskatchewan. After they're a while, they leave.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to meet . . . I had a Zoom call meeting with RBC Royal Bank. They have set up an immigrant retention team in Saskatchewan, in Regina, specifically oriented to ensuring that when immigrants land in Saskatchewan, they have an appropriate education about how our financial system works because in many cases it's quite different than in a previous country.

They work to make sure that those folks have access to information, appropriate education on how credit works in Saskatchewan, ensures that they're set up with bank accounts, that they know how those bank accounts work and the debit cards. Mr. Speaker, fantastic work. I know it's probably happening at all of our big banks, but I was . . . really appreciated

to be invited to speak with this group.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in that meeting they told me something that was actually kind of a gut punch. They said, people that we're dealing with call Saskatchewan Saskatche-exit. That's what immigrants in Saskatchewan are calling our province: Saskatche-exit, Mr. Speaker. Because they are landing here and then they are leaving. They're leaving this province.

I couldn't believe it, Mr. Speaker. I told them my commitment, our commitment as an official opposition would be to change that. Mr. Speaker, every single person landing in Saskatchewan, we should be wrapping our arms around them and we should be retaining those immigrants.

More anecdotally, my partner recently started as a real estate agent and has been working with folks moving to Saskatchewan. And consistently folks who are new to Canada tell him, we're buying a house here to build up that equity and in five years we're leaving. We're moving to Calgary. We're leaving Saskatchewan. This is a five-year plan for us. And they're leaving.

Mr. Speaker, this retention record speaks for itself. So while I welcome absolutely every means to ensure that we are treating our immigrants with the utmost dignity and respect and integrity, we have to be having a conversation about retention. And we have to be addressing some of the worst immigrant retention rates in the country, Mr. Speaker.

There's a couple extra questions that we have, and I know that our critic, the critic for Immigration, will be doing a lot more consultation work on this file, speaking with stakeholders and asking important questions in committee. So with that, Mr. Speaker, with those comments on the record, I will be moving to adjourn debate on Bill No. 160, *The Immigration Services Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To facilitate the work of committees, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:43.]

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