



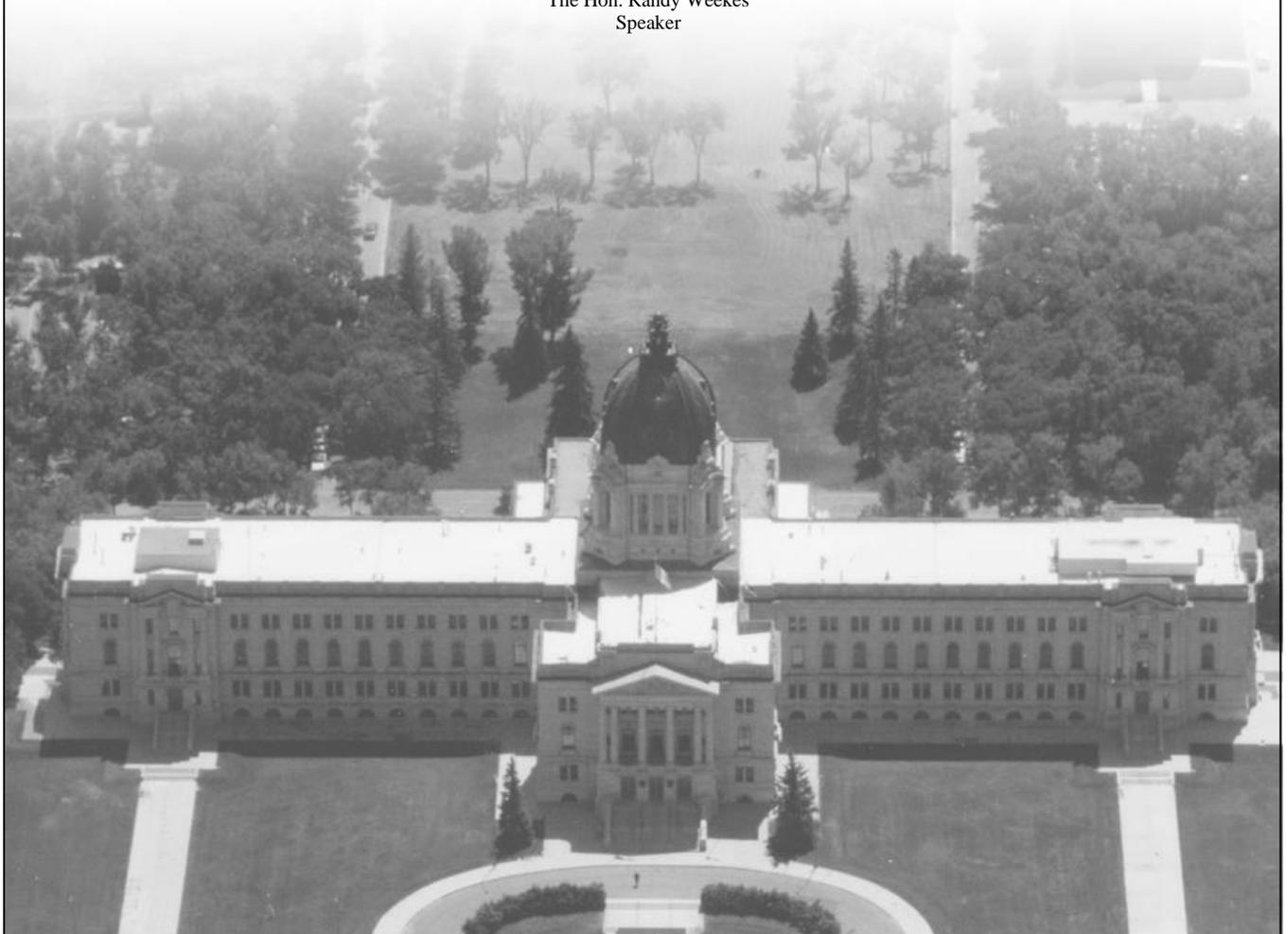
FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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)
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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

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I am pleased to introduce guests seated on the floor of the Chamber today: Saskatchewan’s 10th Poet Laureate, dee Hobsbawn-Smith, and her husband, David Margoshes. They are accompanied by Legislative Librarian Melissa Bennett.

dee lives with her husband, Dave, who is a writer, on Treaty 6 territory on the remnants of her family farm west of Saskatoon where she runs, gardens, quilts, and grows orchids. She writes award-winning poetry, novels, short stories, and essays, which are sometimes influenced by her background as a chef and local foods advocate. She’s served as a mentor, as an editor, and as the Saskatoon Public Library’s 35th writer-in-residence.

She earned her M.F.A. [Master of Fine Arts] in writing and M.A. [Master of Arts] in English at the University of Saskatchewan. dee taught creative writing at St. Peter’s College in Muenster and has taught thousands of people how to cook.

She’s written 10 books, most recently *Among the Untamed* poems. A short-list finalist in the Saskatchewan Book Awards for Poetry Award and City of Saskatoon Award. The poet laureate program is a program of the Saskatchewan Writers’ Guild. It celebrates the spirit of Saskatchewan through the literary arts.

April was National Poetry Month whose theme this year is “Weather.” I invite all members to join dee as she presents her poetry in the Library Reading Room at 3:30 p.m. today on the theme “Weather Within, Weather Without.”

Please join me in welcoming dee and Dave to their Legislative Assembly.

I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d 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. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, I’d like to join with you and with the other members in welcoming the Poet Laureate to the Assembly today and encourage people to attend.

But, Mr. Speaker, the reason that I’m on my feet is for an introduction regarding the 2023 Saskatchewan Volunteer Medals. These medals were presented earlier today by the Lieutenant Governor. Some of the medal recipients are in the House today, not all of them, but I would like to certainly read

their names into the record. I understand that there will be some further particulars given, either in another member’s statement or further introduction.

But some of the ones, and I will list all of them: Jyotsna “Jo” Custead, Suzanne Eisler, Major Brad Hrycyna, Jim Meikle, Douglas Osborn, Jeanette Tonita, Pat Tymchatyn, Hazel Urbanoski, Dr. Judy White, and Helga Wold.

Mr. Speaker, those are people that have generously donated of their time, their work, and expenses for bettering their community in our province. From things as simple as a baking sale to providing massive expertise in agricultural science and other things, these are some of our best, brightest, and some of the ones that we regard as role models for ourselves. And I would like, Mr. Speaker, to ask all members to join in welcoming these people to their Assembly.

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 to join with yourself and the member opposite in welcoming all these esteemed guests to their Legislative Assembly.

I’m going to start by welcoming dee as the Saskatchewan Poet Laureate. I was writing down your accomplishments as the Speaker was reading them into the record. And it’s a background so unique and so interesting, and I’m really excited to hear from you later today here at the Legislative Library.

I always think about people who write books. I’ve always been interested. I said I want to write. I have things, and you know, stories. You think about these things, but sitting down to put pen to paper is much more difficult than it looks. And so I really commend folks who are able to communicate to us through this medium. And so I just really want to ask all members here today to join me in welcoming dee to her Legislative Assembly.

And while I’m on my feet, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned I will join with the member opposite to welcome all of these amazing volunteers to their Legislative Assembly. The third week in April we celebrate volunteers week, and our province, our country wouldn’t be what it is without the countless hours of volunteer work that people like yourselves put into all sorts of different passions and interests. And I just know that, on behalf of the official opposition and all the members in this Assembly, we thank you so much for the work that you do in your communities.

And we will be celebrating you today, as I hear, in future members’ statements. But just welcome to your Legislative Assembly and congratulations on being recognized for the work that you’ve done in your communities. I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these folks to their Assembly.

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

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Request 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.

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues. To you and through you, I would like to introduce two recipients of the volunteer medals that the Provincial Secretary just finished speaking about.

Joining us here today is Major Brad Hrycyna. Major Hrycyna had a long and storied military career, Mr. Speaker, and I want to take this opportunity to thank him for his years of service in multiple roles all across Canada.

But I really want to talk about today what Brad chose to do in his retirement. He was a driving force in the 15 Victoria Cross recipients having beautiful plaques on display in room 218, and he also started the commemorative pedestal project at the cenotaph in downtown Regina. It educates visitors on why we honour our veterans.

Educating youth on Canada's role in global conflicts is absolutely critical, Mr. Speaker, and we owe so much to our veterans in the past, present, and future. I ask all members to join me in welcoming Major Brad Hrycyna to this, his Legislative Assembly.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to introduce James "Jim" Meikle to the Assembly. Jim runs a small business in Tullymet which focuses on mechanical repair, largely supporting the agricultural sector. Anyone that has fed cows or seeded or harvested crops or any farm job knows the frustration when equipment is giving trouble. And Jim is the first person you ever reach out to. He has an understanding of mechanical, electrical, and hydraulic systems that are truly unmatched, Mr. Speaker.

And it kind of reminds me, Jim. I started Sheila's lawn mower the other day, and it started up but it was running a little rough. I don't know if the jet is stuck in the carb, and it's flooding itself or . . . I'll talk about that another time.

Jim's passion, Mr. Speaker, is restoring antique farm equipment and putting on historic threshing bees. He has fully functioning farm tractors, threshing machines, and numerous other antique equipment. He focuses on educating youth on the importance of our pioneer ancestors and how they worked the land. And his community threshing bee has been running for over 19 years, is always free to attend, and hundreds show up annually to pitch some sheaves and drive tractors over 100 years old. He also puts on a fantastic thresherman's lunch too, Mr. Speaker.

So please join me in welcoming Jim and his wife, Marg, who are celebrating 46 years of marriage to this, their Legislative Assembly. 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 member opposite to welcome James "Jim" Meikle and his wife, Marg, to their Assembly and to thank Jim for all of his leadership and service and continuing to tell that very proud history of agricultural innovation from generations past, Mr. Speaker, and bringing community together.

And it's a real honour to recognize and to thank Major Brad Hrycyna for his leadership and his service to his country and within our community and our province. Major Hrycyna continues to lead through the Royal United Services Institute. He's led, as has been identified, with honouring those recipients of the Victoria Cross medals here in this legislature, Mr. Speaker.

And of course he's led the pedestal project over at the cenotaph in Victoria Park. And I've had the privilege of joining him for some of those unveilings and certainly have observed those pedestals and the very impactful and important story to be told about service and sacrifice of so many across this province.

So it's my pleasure to welcome an extraordinary community leader, someone who's given so much to his country, Major Brad Hrycyna, to his legislature.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you. Last Friday was the 25th annual Paragon Business Excellence Awards in Regina, and joining us today are three incredible local businesses who won much deserved awards.

Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, seated in the west gallery, it is my pleasure to introduce Kyle and Danelle Moffatt, founders of Sticks & Doodles and the winners of the Young Entrepreneur award, known for their innovative and collaborative wood designs.

Seated in the west gallery is Sylvia Kreutzer, owner of Over the Hill Orchards and Winery, winner of the Customer Service Excellence award for their unique and authentic culinary and winery experiences.

Also seated in the west gallery we have representatives from SaskMilk. We have Anita Medl, Chelsea Wilcoxon, and Teresa Florizone. SaskMilk won the Marketing and Promotional Achievement award for their innovation, collaboration, and excellence in promoting dairy farmers in Saskatchewan. I ask all members to join me in welcoming these talented individuals to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming these distinguished, now winners of the Paragon Awards last Friday. I was lucky to attend with the member from Walsh Acres as well as the Premier and several other members opposite to help celebrate this 25th anniversary of the Paragon Awards. Hard to imagine Regina without them. And what a celebration it was, and we see this represented up in the gallery with just some of the absolute best that Saskatchewan has to offer.

From Kyle and Danelle, just like good, earnest, brick-and-mortar, mom-and-pop shop entrepreneurs starting from, I think, Kyle, you said from a basement, building up to just an extraordinary national business that we're so proud is here in Regina. Thank you for what you do as entrepreneurs and also for leading with your values and the important advocacy work that you do around entrepreneurship and around mental health as well. I want to recognize you especially for that. It does not go unseen, and it does not go unvalued in the community.

And also too, to Over the Hill Orchards with Sylvia, just absolutely fantastic. I've had the privilege of attending some dinners out there and am so thankful you're here in our broader Regina community and pitching in and doing your part to just make this an extraordinary part of the world to live in and to show off to people who come and visit us here. So thank you for the hard work and the thousands of trees that you planted, the ones that you killed and the ones that have continued to thrive. And all of our best for the work going forward as well.

[13:45]

And just the extraordinary team at SaskMilk. I know you have a lot of fans in this Assembly, from dairy farmers like the member from Lumsden-Morse to small cheese store owners like myself. Thank you for the work that you do for so many in this province and for the absolute innovation that you've shown in the field. I'd like to, on behalf of the official opposition, extend my congratulations to the folks here as well as all winners and nominees tonight, Mr. Speaker.

And while I'm on my feet, I'd also like to take a moment to recognize the wonderful people from the Mechanical Contractors Association seated in your gallery who are here just doing some incredibly, incredibly vigorous and mature advocacy work for their organization and their interests here in the province, Mr. Speaker. So on behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming these fine folks to their Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lumsden-Morse.

Mr. B. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the member from Lumsden-Morse would like to send his personal greetings to three, indeed, friends across in the west gallery, members of the staff at SaskMilk who I've had the privilege of working with for a very, very long time and I count them as very, very close friends.

Teresa Florizone I don't know well yet, but I know I will because she's only in day seven of her new role as the executive director at SaskMilk. So welcome. You have a tremendous team to work

with. I know that first-hand.

And Anita Medl, marketing manager and one of the most gracious hosts that you will ever meet. Her joy is complete when she is serving, and she serves well. And if Anita doesn't know you, you haven't lived in Saskatchewan long enough. She will know you.

And working alongside her as well as a marketing specialist, Chelsea Wilcoxon, working in social media, events, the school milk program, the list could go on. The one that I'm really proud of as well is the Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association, a very, very long-time involvement. The producers of this province, all 147 of them, are very, very happy to be able to support such a worthwhile organization.

Thank you for being here, in this your legislature, and welcome on behalf of me.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm on my feet to recognize a friend seated in the east gallery, a man of mystery, Donald Jedlic. Don hails from the Jedlic dynasty out of Stoughton. His parents, Anna and Emil, came to Saskatchewan as war refugees in the 1950s, I believe after his father spent some time in a Russian prison camp. And they set up a bustling meat market in Arcola, Saskatchewan, and then went on to raise a large family out of Stoughton, Saskatchewan.

Don is something of an enigma. Don himself, certainly he's a lover and observer of politics, a photographer of the people, a loving father and partner, and a real fixture in Regina Elphinstone-Centre. From time to time he answers the phones in our office, and he's a real advocate for the people of that neighbourhood. You'll see him around town on his bicycle often. Just a good friend, and I want to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to be on my feet to welcome several board members and staff from the Mechanical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan in your gallery. Some of the representatives that are here today — and I'm just going to ask them to give a quick wave when they hear their name — is president and national director, Joanne Harpauer-Digneau; we have first vice-president, Jarvis Rye; national director, Ken Swann; directors Nathan Rysavy, Steve Hall, Justin Yawney, and Kim Skjonsby; as well as executive director, Carolyn Bagnell. And joining them this afternoon are a couple of familiar faces to this building, Joel Peterson and Dan D'Autremont.

MCAS [Mechanical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan] is the voice of the plumbing, heating, refrigeration, steamfitting, pipefitting, and sheet metal trades here in Saskatchewan, and members benefit from industry advocacy, networking events, education as well as other member services. The companies that MCAS represents do great work across our province, and it truly is a pleasure to have them with us today.

The representatives that are here this afternoon have had a busy day meeting with MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], and we're looking forward to joining them later on this afternoon for another visit as well as some more dialogue.

So at this time I'd like to ask all members of this Assembly to join me in welcoming our guests from MCAS this afternoon to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Friesen: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I just want to single one out of there which is Ken Swann. And I've known Ken since high school — that's three or four years ago — but Ken also lives in my constituency just a few blocks from myself.

And his smile and his attitude and what he gives back to the community over and over again is nothing short of amazing. He's worked with Scouts for I think a little over 15 years in Montgomery as well as personally and with his business just giving back to the community. So please everybody join me in welcoming Ken to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce another member of the MCAS cast of characters today and that's Jarvis Rye out of North Battleford. Jarvis and his wife, Glenda, do an incredible job in our community, not only by running a very successful business, LUK Plumbing and Heating, and employing numerous people in our community and our wider region as well, but they are very involved, whether that be in the Rotary Club or whether that be giving back to the numerous organizations that we have doing incredible work in The Battlefords.

So I'd like to thank Jarvis for being here as part of the MCAS delegation, and I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming him to his legislature.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd also . . . it's always a pleasure to have guests from out of province join us here in the Legislative Assembly. And today we have an old friend of mine from university, Mr. Colin Buschman, joining us in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

Colin and I go back several years, and he's back in town here for the SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] convention. He does important work representing the members of the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] through the National Police Federation.

Had an opportunity to sit down with Colin and several members of his organization a couple of weeks ago when he was in town for SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities]. It's good to see him back and have him here at question period, and again thank him for the important work that he does representing the many RCMP members in our province, including again in my community, which does have the largest RCMP detachment in the province, which we are very proud of.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming Colin to the Saskatchewan legislature.

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

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, and in your gallery, I'd like to introduce some community leaders from the great Southwest.

To start off with, we have Brady Berg. He's the mayor of Frontier, Saskatchewan. And Denny Wold is from Frontier also. Denny's mother, Helga Wold, had received the provincial volunteer merit award this morning over at the . . . [inaudible] . . . so very much.

And also we have a leader from the town of Gull Lake. Forty-year veteran, fire chief, Bentley Gibson. And also behind there, hiding behind — I think he's intentional — a newlywed back there, the mayor of Fox Valley, Saskatchewan, Sean Checkley. So I'd like to welcome you all to your legislature, and enjoy your afternoon. Thank you.

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

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, and to all members of this Assembly, I'd like to join with the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport and welcome Kyle Moffatt to his Legislative Assembly.

Kyle and I have someone in common through work experience. His dad, Wade Moffatt, and I worked together at CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] Saskatoon for many years, starting in creative services together. So we're Facebook friends, and I'm able to follow his family's activities and his work activities through social media. So welcome, Kyle, to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the members opposite and welcome Kyle to his Legislative Assembly. I had the pleasure of working with Kyle's grandfather, Sinclair Harrison, so I've had the great pleasure of serving with him and got to know obviously your grandmother Gail as well and her family. So I just want to welcome you to your Assembly. So thank you so much.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to present the following petition. The folks 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; the Sask Party government continues to move forward in duty-to-consult processes without fulfilling constitutional obligations set through many court cases that have shaped how duty-to-consult should be observed in present day, including multiple court rulings; 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, making it contrary to developments in the Commonwealth and to the requirements contained in both Saskatchewan's 2010 and 2023 duty-to-consult policy framework.

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 the meaningful duty-to-consult legislation.

The folks who signed this petition reside in Prince Albert, Leask, and Sturgeon Lake. I do so present.

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

Ms. Lambert: — 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's decision to not collect or remit the carbon tax on home heating in Saskatchewan has led to a drop in inflation; further, that despite the decision to not charge the carbon tax on home heating, Saskatchewan families continue to pay that tax out of pocket at the pumps, grocery stores, and more.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request 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. 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 today calling on the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to suspend the fuel tax.

The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to our attention the following: Saskatchewan people are struggling to keep up with the 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, Mr. Speaker, while this government likes to point to the federal government for all the cost-of-living woes, they have tools in their tool box to make life more affordable for the people of Saskatchewan. And they could follow other jurisdictions such as Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, and Newfoundland and suspend

the provincial fuel tax on gasoline and diesel by 15 cents.

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 increased costs 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 a petition calling for 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; that without emergency services, the communities of Duck Lake, Rosthern, and the surrounding rurals are forced to travel to Saskatoon or Prince Albert for care; that the shortage of doctors is impacting the local clinics and long-term care homes, with some unable to provide the level of care that they have historically been able to provide; and that nearly 1,000 people in Duck Lake, Rosthern, and the surrounding area are without a family doctor.

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 areas.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories today reside in Bellevue and Duck Lake. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

White Pony Lodge Keeps North Central Neighbourhood Safe

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in honour of an important organization in Regina, White Pony Lodge.

[14:00]

White Pony Lodge is one of the non-profit organizations. It works to keep Regina North Central neighbourhood safe. They patrol the area on Friday and Saturday nights. They pick up dangerous items and offer help and support to those who need it. Volunteers and staff carry out first aid kits and naloxone. They also hand out food, water, and warm clothes to the folks in need.

At the end of January, the member of Walsh Acres and I got a chance to spend an evening patrolling with them. We went with the volunteers from Pony Lodge and the University of Regina Restorative Justice Club. Mr. Speaker, the care and patience that these people have in their communities is truly inspiring. The work they do is much needed and much appreciated. It's to ensure that Regina North Central is a place of safety, safe care, and stability.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members in this Assembly to join me in recognizing the White Pony Lodge and the amazing and life-saving work it does within the community. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Regina Resident Runs in Boston Marathon

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday was the running of the 128th Boston Marathon. It's been run annually since 1897 and is one of the most prestigious running events in the world. It attracts 500,000 spectators along the route and millions more watching online or on television.

Mr. Speaker, this is a gruelling race — 26.2 miles up and down hills, and depending on weather it can be extremely hot or cold. To top it off, you have to jockey your way around 30,000 other competitors. Now you don't just wake up one morning and say, I want to run this race. You have to qualify in a sanctioned event, and the Queen City Marathon is one of them.

We have a person right here from Regina who did just that. Morgan Bradshaw, my son — or as I like to say, my little boy — who is well known in this building, qualified. And it has been a dream of his for a long time to run the Boston Marathon. His time was three hours and four seconds. Wow. In the 18-to-39 male group, he finished 1,895th place out of 4,985 competitors. That is great.

I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Morgan on this amazing accomplishment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Regina Resident Establishes Free Puzzle Library

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today to recognize a constituent of mine in Regina Walsh Acres, Roxanne Gallagher. Roxanne has created a unique gathering spot on her front yard through both her love of gardening and doing puzzles.

Upon retirement in 2018 from professional life as a registered nurse, Roxanne decided to establish a little free library on her front lawn. But instead of books, it's for puzzles. With the help of her husband's handiwork, an impressive wooden grain elevator from the town of Puzzleville was built to display all types of puzzles. Puzzleville is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year, and everything is free to take. There is even a geocache hidden there as well.

Roxanne uses the motto "take, give and take, or just donate."

Puzzle donations are welcome for both children and adults, and this has created a real sense of community and sharing. Many folks have told Roxanne that this was a lifeline for them during the pandemic. And I can attest, whenever I am on her street, people are always stopping by and checking out the puzzles.

I ask all members of this Legislative Assembly to congratulate Roxanne Gallagher for her contributions to building community with a simple idea like a puzzle box and providing others with a reason to think inside the box.

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

Mechanical Contractors Association Contributes to Provincial Growth

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're joined today by the Mechanical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan, or MCAS, to this Assembly. MCAS, comprising dedicated professionals and businesses, plays a vital role in our province's mechanical contracting industry. They represent many, many companies committed to excellence and innovation in mechanical contracting services across Saskatchewan.

Their organization has a long and distinguished record of worthwhile service in Saskatchewan, having grown out of the Saskatchewan Association of Sanitary and Heating Engineers in 1919. And in fact, in 2019 the organization celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Throughout this day, the MCAS board has engaged in meaningful discussions with MLAs, deputy ministers, government officials, highlighting their contributions to Saskatchewan's infrastructure and economy. This evening they extend an invitation to all for a reception in room 218.

The partnership between the government and organizations like MCAS has become increasingly crucial. As we embark on the journey outlined in the recent budget and growth plan, it is the expertise and ingenuity of MCAS that will serve as the foundation for our collective success. Their contributions in planning, designing, and executing vital infrastructure projects are fundamental to our province's continued growth and prosperity.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing the invaluable contributions of the Mechanical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan and in extending our best wishes for a successful day here at the legislature. Thank you.

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

Recipients of 2023 Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal Honoured

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Volunteers play an essential role in our communities, and countless organizations across Saskatchewan rely on these selfless individuals to support important causes.

In recognition of their contributions, the Government of

Saskatchewan established a declaration in 1995 to honour outstanding members of the province's volunteer sector. Any Canadian citizen who is a long-term resident of Saskatchewan is eligible for nomination for the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

Volunteers are especially vital in rural Saskatchewan as many organizations would not exist without their hard work and dedication. Fire departments, youth sports teams, community fairs, festivals, and more depend on volunteers to keep running. Did you know, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the highest rate of volunteerism in Canada? This is a testament to the generosity, care, and hard work of its people.

This morning the 2023 presentation of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medals was held by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at Government House. I was very excited to attend, along with the Premier; yourself, Mr. Speaker; and many other colleagues.

The 2023 recipients are as follows: Jo Custead, Suzanne Eisler, Brad Hrycyna, Douglas Osborn, Jeanette Tonita, Pat Tymchatyn, Hazel Urbanoski, Dr. Judy White, Helga Wold, and Jim Meikle.

Thank them for all of their service to this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Paragon Awards Recognize Local Businesses

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On Friday members of the Regina business community gathered at the Conexus Arts Centre to recognize leaders in their community at the 25th Regina and district annual Paragon Awards.

A new award, the Community Service Leadership award, was presented by the Premier to Michelle Al-Katib for her exceptional leadership in volunteering. The Young Entrepreneur award went to Sticks & Doodles, a craft company founded by Kyle and Danelle Moffatt. Redhead Equipment was awarded the Community Involvement award for their exceptional service to the Regina community.

The Community Alliance award for small business was presented to the Hospitals of Regina Foundation for their work in organizing the very popular Evening in Greece fundraising event. The Community Alliance award for large business was awarded to Fries Tallman Lumber for their work in organizing A Night to Remember. Customer Service award went to Over the Hill Orchards and Winery.

Marketing and Promotional Achievement went to SaskMilk. Diversity and Inclusion award went to the good folks at Pro Metal Industries. And the Environmental achievement award went to ReThink BioClean, an Indigenous-run company. And finally the Business of the Year awards were awarded to Wascana Flower Shoppe and Fries Tallman Lumber.

Congratulations to all the award winners on their recognition, and thank you to all the Regina businesses who make this a great place to live.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Willowgrove.

Saskatchewan Inflation Rate and Opposition's Position on Carbon Tax

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As my colleagues have already pointed out, it is indeed a great day in Saskatchewan. And much to the opposition's disappointment, inflation continues to decrease in our province, but the same can't be said for the rest of Canada.

The national inflation rate is up from 2.8 per cent in February to 2.9 per cent in March. But here in Saskatchewan, our economic policies are paying off. Inflation dropped again from 1.7 per cent in February to 1.5 per cent in March. In our two major cities, in Saskatoon we saw inflation drop from 2.1 per cent to 1.8 per cent, and Regina dropped from 2 per cent to 1.9 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, our decision not to remit the Trudeau-NDP carbon tax on home heating is contributing to this reduction in inflation. Just a few days ago, we saw the federal leader of the NDP, Jagmeet Singh, backpedal on his support for the carbon tax only to backpedal again to support it. This is no different from the opposition here in Saskatchewan who sometimes support the carbon tax and sometimes don't. When will the NDP get their story straight?

It has often been said in this House that the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. In that case, Saskatchewan people can expect the NDP to continue flip-flopping on their carbon tax position. A Saskatchewan leader said last night at a large, large gathering, "If you give the NDP an inch, the province will be 10 miles behind." Mr. Speaker, we are sure this isn't . . .

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Fuel Tax and Affordability Measures

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government has completely lost sight of the things that matter to Saskatchewan families. They're more interested in their own political games, and they're shutting down anyone who stands up to them.

They're more interested in politics than in taking care of Saskatchewan people. And we see that on every issue, but nowhere is that more clear than on the cost of living. This government has hiked taxes and power bills at a time when families are at a breaking point. Why won't the Premier cut the fuel tax and give families a break at the pump?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, thank you, and as pointed out by the member who read the last member's statement, it is very encouraging for Saskatchewan that our CPI [consumer price index] has dropped 1.5 per cent, which is almost half of what the national average is.

But when looking at what the members opposite are suggesting

on not collecting the carbon tax . . . or sorry, the fuel excise tax on fuel here in Saskatchewan, we made other choices. Every province makes choices of what they're going to do for affordability, Mr. Speaker. We chose not to collect carbon tax on home heating, Mr. Speaker. We chose to reduce personal income tax. We chose to have an active families benefit. We chose to have a graduate retention program. We chose to increase the seniors' income plan.

We made a number of choices for affordability in Saskatchewan and if he should turn in the budget document to page 75 and 76, he will see that Saskatchewan is the most affordable place for a family to live in all of Canada.

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

Funding for Education

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, this Premier is failing to deliver on the cost of living, and he's failing to deliver on education. We're joined today in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, by Taya Thomas. She's a mother who's seen first-hand this government's failure to invest in classrooms and the impact it has on our kids. Her daughter Mayelle used a wheelchair and had special needs, needs that could not be accommodated in the school system. Sadly Mayelle has passed away. But Taya is fighting to make sure every kid gets the supports that they need at school.

What does the Premier say to parents like Taya who are being failed by his Sask Party government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome Taya to her Legislative Assembly and thank her for advocating on behalf of students around the province. And I want to pass on my personal condolences to her for the loss of her daughter.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to supporting children in this province, this is a government that has made significant investments in the last number of years. In this budget, we've added another nearly 15 per cent of funding in the classroom supports funding to ensure that students of all abilities, Mr. Speaker, and that school divisions have the funding to work with those students and families and make sure that those supports can be provided. Thank you.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, that is tired spin in the face of tragic, tragic loss. Taya fought hard to get the supports that Mayelle needed, even in the face of cuts forced by this tired and out-of-touch government. Now early on, Mayelle had access to the early development program offered at her school. But because of Sask Party underfunding to public education, that program that Mayelle and other children counted on was cut. So parents like Taya had to pay for many of those supports out of pocket.

[14:15]

This minister likes to talk about record funding of education. We hear it every year. If he thinks his government is doing enough on education, why were those supports for children like Mayelle cut?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can assure the member opposite and everyone here today that supporting children and families is a major priority of this government each and every single day, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite derides many of the measures that we have put into the budget this year. It is record funding — \$356.6 million for classrooms supports funding distributed to all 27 school divisions around the province. We understand that school divisions around the province are going to make different decisions on how that programming is offered to residents and families in communities all across this province, Mr. Speaker.

But this is a government that is serious about ensuring that there are adequate classroom supports, Mr. Speaker. We're serious enough to sign a multi-year funding agreement with the 27 school divisions in the Saskatchewan School Boards Association to set that as a minimum floor of supports funding for the next four years, Mr. Speaker.

You've heard both the Premier and I speak that this is a floor. We know that there needs to be more investment, Mr. Speaker. We added to that in a significant way in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker, and we look forward to continuing investing in the classrooms.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan used to lead the nation in per-student funding of public education. Now we're in 10th place. That's dead last. That is this government's record.

When Mayelle was in her school, extreme heat in the spring and the fall would cause her to have seizures at school. Taya had to fight tooth and nail and eventually had to pay out of pocket to get an air conditioner installed just to keep her daughter healthy. The teachers did everything they could, but this comes down to a lack of funding from this tired and out-of-touch government.

Does the minister think it's okay that schools in Saskatchewan are getting so hot that they're causing seizures for medically vulnerable kids like Mayelle?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We fully understand, this government, that we want to ensure that the schools that our children go to each and every single day are adequately prepared and adequately equipped to meet the needs of our students, Mr. Speaker.

That is why we are investing over \$216 million just in this budget year in school capital, Mr. Speaker. Another \$50 million for preventative maintenance renewal funding, again distributed to

all 27 school divisions.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that has built 69 new schools, 32 major renovations since we took power in 2007. This is a government that is very serious about capital improvements around our schools, a record that that member opposite derided again at committee last week, Mr. Speaker.

Even the PMR [preventative maintenance and renewal] funding, the money that school divisions use to improve systems and ensure that buildings are comfortable for students and staff, Mr. Speaker, that PMR funding didn't exist under the NDP. Today that funding level is at \$50 million annually, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, Taya isn't just concerned about what happened to Mayelle when she was in the school system; she's concerned about her other children too. Her daughter has 28 kids in her grade 1 and 2 class. Can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker? Twenty-eight young children in grades 1 and 2 and one teacher with 28 kids trying to learn. It's not acceptable. When will the minister accept responsibility for the mess that they've made of education and for letting class sizes in our province get out of control?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to thank Taya again for continuing to speak on behalf of her children in this province, as well as the children all over the province, the nearly 200,000 kids that attend pre-K to 12 [pre-kindergarten to grade 12] school around this province. Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to meet with Taya after question period to further discuss her concerns and to work with her on how we can address the specific situation that she is concerned about.

But when it comes to addressing the size of our classrooms in this province, Mr. Speaker, as I answered in my last question, we are making significant capital investments. Again since 2007, 69 new schools, 32 major renovation projects, numerous minor capital projects all around the province not to mention additional dollars announced just a couple months ago for more relocatable classrooms to address significant growth that we're seeing in our two major cities as well as a number of communities seeing significant growth around the province, Mr. Speaker.

We know that these are challenges, Mr. Speaker. These are challenges, quite honestly, that come with a growing province, a growing economy, but this government is committed to addressing those challenges. We've added significant capital investment in previous years' budget, again in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker, not to mention the operational dollars that I've spoken about before.

Again, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to a province that is seeing growth and going to address the challenges of that growth, people can count on this government to do so. Thank you.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess that minister's talking points will have to be comfort to a grieving mother sitting in the gallery. Mr. Speaker, Taya is a constituent of mine. She lost her daughter, but she's still fighting to make sure that kids in Saskatchewan schools can get the supports that they need.

When Mayelle finished at her elementary school, she was told she couldn't go to high school because the developmental needs classroom was full. Taya was asked to give up her spot so another student should attend. Does the minister think that it's acceptable for parents to be told that their children can't go to high school in Saskatchewan due to a lack of supports?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly as government we recognize that every child in this province has a right to education. That may look different in different communities and for different children, but we understand there is a right to education. And we are committed, again, to working with our 27 local school divisions to ensure that they have the funding that they need to meet the needs of their children and their families, Mr. Speaker.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we would encourage all parents to be engaged with their local school divisions, be engaged with their local school communities, understand how they can work with those groups to meet the needs that their children have.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I said in a previous answer, I'd be happy to meet with Taya after question period and just get a little bit more context and understanding of her specific situation and how we can work with her. Thank you.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Did the minister just suggest that a parent of a medically vulnerable child needs to better engage with the school system? Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the member has not had very many interactions with parents with medically vulnerable children advocating for them in Saskatchewan schools.

The lack of support for children with special needs here in Saskatchewan is appalling. Mayelle should've had those supports in school, Mr. Speaker, but those supports were cut. Therapy supports, cut. Her music teacher, cut. Speech pathologist, cut. Special program support, cut. All as a result of the Sask Party's underfunding of our education system. That is what this boils down to, Mr. Speaker.

What does the Education minister say to parents like Taya, engaged parents like Taya, who see the supports for their children cut year after year under his government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had the privilege of meeting numerous parents around the province, Mr. Speaker, of all different sorts of families and makeups, and had the ability to try and understand exactly the needs and challenges that we're seeing all over the province, whether that's here in

Regina or in Saskatoon or in smaller communities all over the province.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there are challenges in the classroom. We recognize that there are challenges in terms of a growing enrolment and challenges that we're seeing in terms of complexity in the classroom. That is why as a government, again, we have significantly increased school operating funding — 8.8 per cent to our 27 school divisions — so that those school divisions have increased resources to be able to better support students and families all around the province.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to parents being engaged, every parent should be engaged, however many children they have in the system, whatever the abilities or situation that their children find themselves in. We would encourage all parents to be engaged with their local school division.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Taya has seen the impacts of the cuts under this government first-hand. She saw them through the cuts for the supports that Mayelle needed, and she sees them every day in the lack of supports in the classrooms of her other children.

Saskatchewan is a rich province, Mr. Speaker. There is no excuse. It should not be this way. It is a choice, and it is a choice of that minister and members opposite. And it's time for a change.

Mr. Speaker, why, why has that minister let things get so bad in Saskatchewan classrooms that teachers are taking job action and parents have to come to the legislature to have their voices heard?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, let's be very clear here. The investments that I've outlined in previous answers, the investments that I've outlined out in the rotunda and in various media appearances around the province, Mr. Speaker, these are investments that we can make as a government because we have a strong and growing economy.

Mr. Speaker, things looked different in the past in this province. We previously had an NDP government in this province that was closing schools, that was seeing declining enrolment, that was having to make choices to fire teachers and reduce the services available to the students and families of this province. Mr. Speaker, in contrast to that we have a government today that recognizes there's challenges, is making significant investments to support children and families.

Mr. Speaker, in a previous question, speech-language pathologists were mentioned. And I would point to the announcement, the budget announcement that the Minister of Advanced Education made on March the 20th in terms of adding an SLP [speech-language pathologist] program, an OT [occupational therapist] program, right here in the province, Mr. Speaker, so we can train Saskatchewan residents to serve Saskatchewan students going forward.

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

Emergency Hotel Stays Paid by Social Services

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, for months we've been pushing for answers from this tired and out-of-touch government on the Thriftlodge motel. That's the second motel connected to the member for Regina Northeast, one of the top hotels used by the Ministry of Social Services to house vulnerable people, and where the nightly rates are inflated more than any other hotel across the province.

But it wasn't always that way, Mr. Speaker, as we learned last night in committee. For three years beginning in 2018, the Ministry of Social Services used that hotel zero times. And then after the election, this minister has handed out nearly \$350,000 to this second hotel connected to his officemate.

How does the minister justify spending so much public money at motels connected to this Sask Party MLA?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, myself and the ministry appeared in estimates last night for quite a long time. Again tonight, look forward to that. It was confirmed in that meeting, when this subject was brought up, I am not involved in any procurement of any hotels or anything else. That is done by our valued public servants as well as our third-party mobile crisis workers, for example, each and every day who make those decisions, Mr. Speaker, when someone needs a place to stay.

We also heard, Mr. Speaker, that I directed officials to look at the policy around hotels. It hadn't changed in many decades. It was the old NDP policy. The ministry is now working on a three-quote process which we heard about, as well as a block of rooms that an RFP [request for proposal] process is currently under way and that is being evaluated as we speak.

Again that was part of the estimates last night, Mr. Speaker. So we're going to continue to move forward with this new policy. And it's a pilot. We'll see how it goes forward.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, when you look at the timeline of the dollars paid out to motels connected for the Sask Party member for Regina Northeast, there's something that doesn't add up. Between the Thriftlodge and the Sunrise, only \$1,309 were paid out to those two motels total over the previous three years to the 2020 election. But once the member for Regina Northeast was elected, the total paid out to those motels jumped to \$731,000. 1,300 before the election; three-quarters of a million dollars after the election.

How can the minister explain this explosion of payments made to hotels connected to his officemate, the member for Regina Northeast?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, in terms of expenditures, it is required at times when there's an emergency situation, when all the other options are full, the shelter side of things in general, we've been very . . . The ministry has worked very hard to increase the amount of spaces in many different settings to help vulnerable people. When there's an overflow situation, hotels are used. They've been used for many, many years, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately over time, particularly here in Regina, there has been a decrease in the amount of hotels and obviously the rooms associated with that that are willing to take on clients, particularly on the income assistance side. We haven't seen that on the child and family side, Mr. Speaker. So any time there's a same amount of expenditures but less facilities willing to take those on, those expenditures will go up in each of those remaining particular hotels.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've been over this many times here on the floor, again in estimates last night. We're coming forward with a new policy, however.

[14:30]

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, we haven't been over this many times. We got these numbers last night. So I'll ask again. 1,300 before the election, three-quarters of a million dollars after the election. How does the minister justify paying out so many public dollars to the member from Regina Northeast?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Of course, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I don't pay that out. That is done by officials within the ministry, and so that process has been talked about. But in a general sense, we have been over this many, many times, and I have no involvement in any procurement or the decisions where to put clients in vulnerable situations, Mr. Speaker.

I've asked that member several times, what is the amount per night that she would be not willing to go over, Mr. Speaker. She won't, of course, say a number. I think this proves once again this is all about politics for the NDP. They're once again putting politics over people.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, in 2018 there were zero dollars paid out to the Thriftlodge motel. In 2019 there were zero dollars paid out to the Thriftlodge motel. In 2020 there were zero dollars paid out to the Thriftlodge motel. Then in 2021, after the election, \$46,000. In 2022, up to \$164,000. The following year, the first half of the following year, up again to \$140,000 for just the first half of that year, on trend to far surpass the year before. Zero before the MLA was elected, three-quarters of a million after he was elected to this Sask Party government.

Mr. Speaker, why did the payments to the Thriftlodge only start after the member from Northeast was elected and after that minister assumed the role of Minister of Social Services?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Once again, Mr. Speaker, unfortunate the member is choosing to play gutter politics here in the Assembly. I've answered this question many times before. Asked, then answered, Mr. Speaker.

Over time unfortunately the number of hotels, particularly in Regina, has decreased. Therefore the amount paid . . . If there's a similar amount of clients need it, Mr. Speaker, then that would result in higher expenditures per hotel.

I know the member likes to make allegations on the floor of the Assembly. I encourage her to make those same allegations out in the rotunda and see how that goes, Mr. Speaker.

But again, the ministry has come up with a new policy, Mr. Speaker, to ensure we're looking after vulnerable people. That to me is the most important part of course, and that will continue. We want to make sure that vulnerable people are looked after but of course get the best deal for taxpayers. I hope this new policy will be part of that.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry that the minister finds it offensive that he's being asked questions around basic accountability, but surely it says more about him than me.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people deserve answers and transparency when it comes to their public dollars. Saskatchewan people work hard for their money. They don't want to see public dollars wasted on inflated hotel rates at hotels connected to Sask Party MLAs. They want their dollars going to classroom supports for kids like Mayelle or to highways or to sustainable housing, Mr. Speaker, or to literally anything other than businesses connected to Sask Party MLAs.

How does the minister justify spending three-quarters of a million dollars to hotels connected to a Sask Party MLA when there are so many other needs in this province going unmet today?

The Speaker: — I'd like to caution the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre about making personal comments. Just take that into account. I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, in terms of the member, of course I'm not offended by any questions, and I'm not sure what gave her that impression. But happy to do so and done so many times, Mr. Speaker. And I've gone over this many times. When this information came forward, I took a look at it. I asked the ministry to find the information the member asked for, first of all, and that was provided several times. As a result of that, asked the ministry to make some changes in terms of procurement, something I had nothing to do with, and officials confirmed that last night in estimates.

The new policy will hopefully drive those costs down, increase the amount of units available in case there is a situation where it is needed, an emergency situation. And having a block of hotel rooms guaranteed, we'll see how that goes, Mr. Speaker, in terms

of using damage deposits. Again that hopefully will reduce the price and increase the competition.

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

Overdose Deaths and Treatment for Addictions

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every single day in this Assembly, our members have raised the overdose crisis and the alarmingly high number of overdose deaths in our communities. With 113 deaths so far this year and counting, we don't have time to hear more of the same from the minister. They think they have it right, Mr. Speaker. But the alarming rates and the people working on the front lines of this crisis know better.

How many more people must die? How many more people must our families lose to this crisis before this government realizes that they have it wrong? Today will the minister stop with the spin, get serious, and implement an evidence-based plan to address the overdose crisis in this province?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And this government is very serious about saving lives. This government is very serious about healing families and we are very serious about strengthening communities when it comes to addressing overdoses and the addictions in this province, Mr. Speaker.

That is exactly why we are helping individuals find the path to recovery by doubling the number of addictions treatment spaces we have available for those individuals. We are making it easier for them to access those spaces and we are wrapping supports around them through recovery-oriented systems of care.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 149, *The Franchise Disclosure Act* with amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 149, *The*

Franchise Disclosure Act and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — When shall the amendments be read a first time? I recognize the minister.

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 149 — *The Franchise Disclosure Act*

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First and second reading of the amendments.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading. I recognize the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 149 — *The Franchise Disclosure Act*

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you. I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 150, *The Securities (Saskatchewan Investors Protection) Amendment Act, 2023* with amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 150, *The Securities (Saskatchewan Investors Protection) Amendment Act, 2023* and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — When shall the amendments be read a first time?

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 150 — *The Securities (Saskatchewan Investors Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First and second reading of the amendments.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 150 — *The Securities (Saskatchewan Investors Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 152, *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act, 2023* with amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 152, *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act, 2023* and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — When shall the amendments be read a first time?

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 152 — *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act, 2023*

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First and second reading of the amendments.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 152 — *The Protection From Human Trafficking (Coerced Debts) Amendment Act, 2023*

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the bill

be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

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 Walsh Acres.

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise today to enter into debate on Bill No. 156, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2024*. You know, looking at the bill and summarizing briefly, the government is looking at anyone who's selling tobacco that they need a licence to do so. Whether that's retail, wholesale, resale, or anywhere else selling tobacco without a licence, if you are doing so, will have their stock seized. If the licence has expired, you will have your stock seized and a number of other scenarios. And also changing enforcement officers being renamed to "revenue investigators" for reasons.

As a former teacher, Mr. Speaker, I think always a good idea to regulate tobacco, to regulate products that, you know, are addictive and if are in the hands of students and young people can cause serious issues. So it is good to see this Act, the amendment here updating things and helping to regulate the sale of those tobacco products. And it's also good to see, you know, there are federal licensing requirements that are set already for tobacco dealers, and it's always good to standardize those across the provinces, across the country.

I think with the rise of vaping products that we're seeing especially amongst young people, you know, this is something that we have concerns about and hope that there is, you know, regulations updates coming for vaping products. This is something that we have offered bipartisan support for in making changes to that legislation.

I also . . . You know, I've heard recently about nicotine pouches as being another product that, you know, has that same addictive property and is a concern to young people who may see this as a healthier alternative or an option that doesn't have the same

toxins or such in, say, a cigarette, but also of concern still, nicotine pouches.

[14:45]

So something to put on the radar of the government, and hopefully we can move to regulate some of those products to make sure that we are keeping them out of the hands of children and young adults who shouldn't become addicted to those products. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 156.

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 Walsh Acres.

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to be up again to speak to Bill No. 157, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2024*. Obviously we're seeing the bill's calling for small business tax rate to be maintained at 1 per cent for another year continuing into July 1st of 2025.

You know, maintaining this tax rate for small businesses is really a good decision. We know from talking with a number of small businesses across the province that many small businesses are struggling, struggling to just continue existing post-COVID, continuing to make sales and keep a lot of people employed. We know that small businesses are the backbone of the Saskatchewan economy.

And it's disappointing to see, you know, in this budget that the government just released a little while ago that we didn't see any, you know, cost-of-living relief for regular people or any tax relief for small businesses when they really could have used some of that relief. We've seen the PST [provincial sales tax] be expanded on so many goods by this government over the last six years, seven years, and they have certainly hurt small businesses across this province.

I do want to give a special shout-out before I adjourn debate on this Act. I want to give a shout-out to all the accountants out there in this province who, you know, are working so hard. I come from a line of accountants. Both my parents are accountants, and somehow I became a biologist and then a teacher and now a politician. So I have totally gone in the opposite direction. But good people, accountants are, and I thank them for all the work that they do to keep businesses running, ensuring that income taxes are filed and all of that good stuff.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 157.

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 Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll weigh in briefly here today with respect to Bill No. 158, *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act*. What I understand they're doing here is they're adding an additional year to apply for the tax credit, from seven to eight, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly as the official opposition, it's our interest to make sure we do all we can to nurture and support innovation in this province, Mr. Speaker, and make sure that those with the ideas and the innovation and those working to commercialize have the supports and structures in place to succeed and to thrive, Mr. Speaker.

Our critic will follow up in committee on this front, and through this legislature they've been engaged as the lead on this file. I believe to this point . . . I don't think it's clear. I don't think to our knowledge at this point anyone's utilized this tax credit, so likely some questions about how effective it's been, what the barriers have been to its uptake or lack thereof, Mr. Speaker.

And then probably a discussion as well about what other measures should and could be taken to grow and support research and innovation and commercialization in Saskatchewan local businesses, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that, as I say, that Saskatchewan is a place where ideas can take a life, Mr. Speaker, and be commercialized as well, Mr. Speaker.

We have so many examples over the years of innovation in Saskatchewan that we can all be so proud of, Mr. Speaker. We need to make sure that we're positioning Saskatchewan entrepreneurs and our researchers and those on the front lines of innovation to be able to have the supports and structures in place to continue to lead in the ways we have in the past, Mr. Speaker.

With that being said, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 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 Regina Walsh Acres.

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to enter into debate on Bill No. 159, *The Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act*. I'll be brief on this one, Mr. Speaker.

The bill aims to, you know, look at corporations who aren't paying their taxes and finding directors at the time liable, together with the corporation, for repayment, including some of the penalties, the assessment, and all of that, all of those things. So I think, you know, it's good to make sure that we're holding corporations accountable, making sure that they are paying their taxes and contributing their fair share to our province. So we stand in favour of the amendment here.

While I'm speaking, you know, I spoke during Bill 157 about how small businesses are hurting. And you know, when we're talking about revenue in this province, I think it's important to be reminded that the Sask Party wants to establish the Saskatchewan revenue agency, a terrible idea that they have concocted at some point in time.

But when we've gone across the province and talked to people, they cannot understand why we would need a whole new bureaucracy to collect taxes when that bureaucracy and the framework already exists, and why Saskatchewan people should be responsible for paying, you know, millions and millions more dollars to just collect those taxes. Nobody we have talked to has been calling for that. Nobody we have been talking to thinks that is a good idea. And so we wonder where that idea has come from.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will move to 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 Walsh Acres.

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I promise this will be the last time I'm going to speak today, but it is a pleasure to be up on Bill 160, *The Immigration Services Act*.

You know, it's good to see protections for vulnerable foreign workers. We've certainly heard across the country about the precarious place foreign workers can be put into in this country, and you know, making sure we have legislation in our province

to protect foreign workers — always a good thing.

1:30 tomorrow.

You know, we would've really liked to have not seen the hard-to-fill skills immigration program cut with only 10 days' notice, previously in the last year. You know, we've heard from many immigrants to Saskatchewan that they were caught off guard with this and that this was really a detriment to their businesses and to them.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:58.]

You know, what we're seeing right now in our province in terms of immigration rates, in terms of population growth . . . It is great to see Saskatchewan growing, absolutely. But it is concerning to see that our immigration retention rate is dropping considerably. So to make sure we are understanding that on the floor of the Assembly: when 100 new immigrants come into Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, 42 of them are now leaving the province within five years. And this is significantly more people leaving now than just five years ago. So our retention rate is decreasing.

And you know, there's kind of a bit of a theme here, I think, with this Sask Party government. We have trouble retaining health care workers. We have trouble retaining immigrants. We have trouble retaining Saskatchewan people in this province. And so I think it's a good time for the government to look in the mirror and say, you know, how can we do a better job for Saskatchewan people, for new Saskatchewan citizens who are immigrating into this province, who are coming from around the world and bringing their culture and ideas and skills and all the good things that they bring to this province.

Saskatchewan was built on immigration and so we are proud to embrace people from around the world that come here. And as Saskatchewan New Democrats, we want to make sure that those people stay here, Mr. Speaker. And right now, that doesn't seem to be the case.

And I think specifically around the file that I am critic for, Rural and Remote Health. When we're talking about, you know, nurses in rural and remote Saskatchewan, we've seen in the last five, six years a 21 per cent loss of registered nurses in those areas of the province. So retention is a huge problem, a huge problem that this government needs to take some responsibility for and find some solutions to keep people in Saskatchewan. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 160. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House now stands adjourned until

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Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Highways

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
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Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
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Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for
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Minister Responsible for
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