



FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

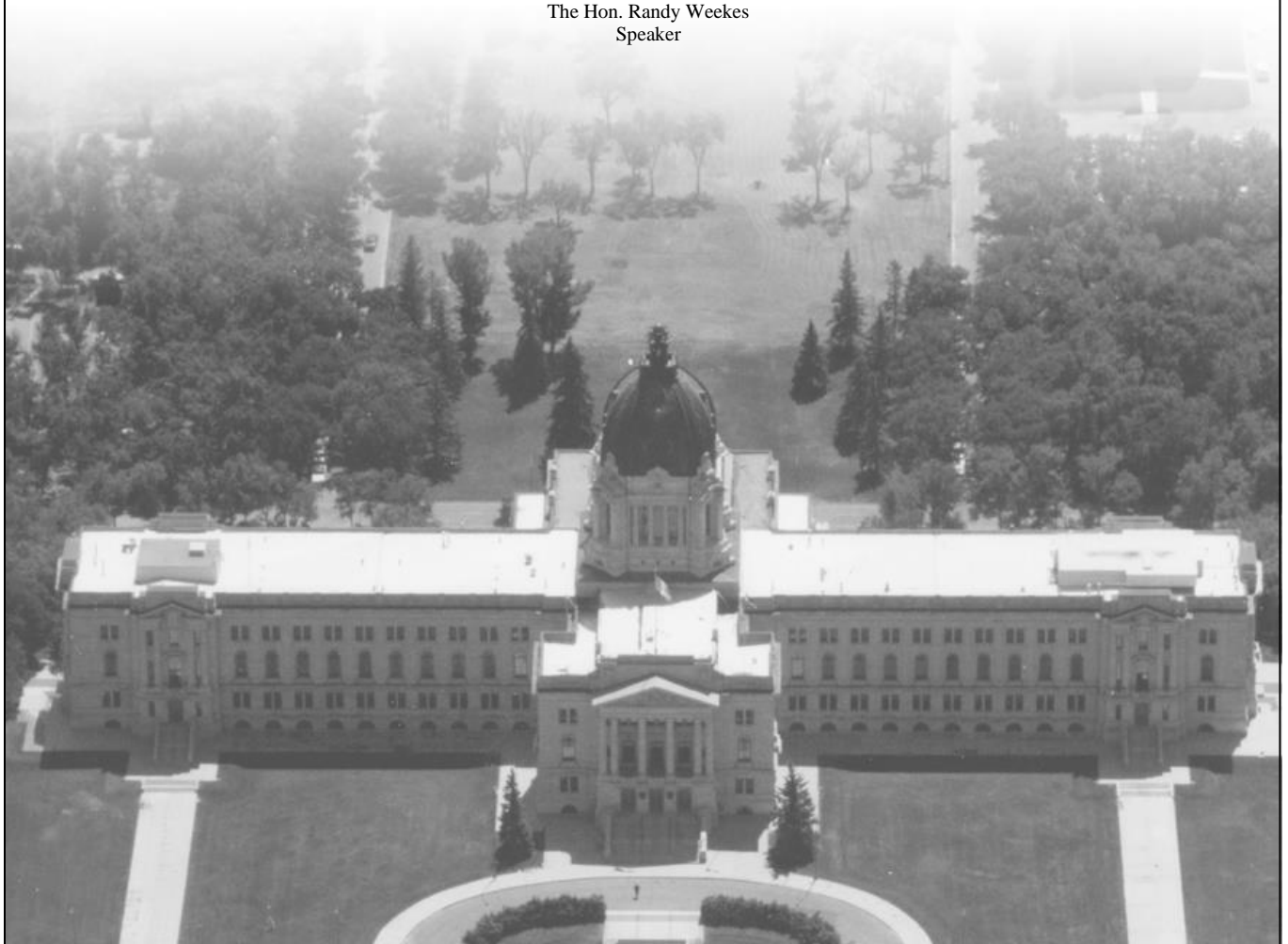
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**DEBATES  
AND  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Randy Weekes  
Speaker



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**4th Session — 29th Legislature**

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

**Speaker** — Hon. Randy Weekes

**Premier** — Hon. Scott Moe

**Leader of the Opposition** — Carla Beck

**Beck, Carla** — Regina Lakeview (NDP)

**Bonk, Steven** — Moosomin (SP)

**Bowes, Jennifer** — Saskatoon University (NDP)

**Bradshaw, Fred** — Carrot River Valley (SP)

**Buckingham, David** — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

**Burki, Noor** — Regina Coronation Park (NDP)

**Carr, Hon. Lori** — Estevan (SP)

**Cheveldayoff, Ken** — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)

**Clarke, Jared** — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP)

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

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

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

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**Friesen, Marv** — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP)

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**Grewal, Gary** — Regina Northeast (SP)

**Hargrave, Hon. Joe** — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)

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**Harrison, Daryl** — Cannington (SP)

**Harrison, Hon. Jeremy** — Meadow Lake (SP)

**Hindley, Hon. Everett** — Swift Current (SP)

**Jenson, Terry** — Martensville-Warman (SP)

**Kaeding, Warren** — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)

**Keisig, Travis** — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)

**Kirsch, Delbert** — Batoche (SP)

**Lambert, Lisa** — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

**Lawrence, Greg** — Moose Jaw Wakamow (Ind.)

**Lemaigre, Jim** — Athabasca (SP)

**Love, Matt** — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)

**Makowsky, Hon. Gene** — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

**Marit, Hon. David** — Wood River (SP)

**McLeod, Blaine** — Lumsden-Morse (SP)

**McLeod, Hon. Tim** — Moose Jaw North (SP)

**McMorris, Hon. Don** — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)

**Merriman, Hon. Paul** — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)

**Moe, Hon. Scott** — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)

**Morgan, Hon. Don** — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

**Mowat, Vicki** — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)

**Nerlien, Hugh** — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)

**Nippi-Albright, Betty** — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)

**Ottenbreit, Greg** — Yorkton (SP)

**Reiter, Hon. Jim** — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)

**Ritchie, Erika** — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

**Ross, Alana** — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)

**Ross, Hon. Laura** — Regina Rochdale (SP)

**Sarauer, Nicole** — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

**Skoropad, Dana** — Arm River (SP)

**Steele, Doug** — Cypress Hills (SP)

**Teed, Nathaniel** — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)

**Tell, Hon. Christine** — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)

**Vermette, Doyle** — Cumberland (NDP)

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

**Wilson, Nadine** — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)

**Wotherspoon, Trent** — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

**Wyant, Hon. Gordon** — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

**Young, Aleana** — Regina University (NDP)

**Young, Colleen** — Lloydminster (SP)

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**Standings**

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

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

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Iris Lang

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

**Deputy Clerk** — Kathy Burianyk

**Principal Clerk** — Robert Park

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Lyall Frederiksen

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within hours after each sitting.

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Leave requested for an extended introduction.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to welcome several folks to their legislature. First of all I just want to say:

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

I just want to say how grateful I am to see the folks here in your gallery join me today. The people that came out to sit with us and listen here today in their legislature reside and are from and . . . many, many leaders. Many leaders from different Nations like Nekaneet First Nation, Yellow Quill First Nation, Onion Lake Cree Nation, Key First Nation, Waterhen First Nation, Carry The Kettle, as well as the IRS [Indian residential school] support workers from the Yorkton Tribal Council.

These folks travelled, you know, in this snowy weather just to come and be here today and to express their concerns that impact them. So it's wonderful to have them join us today in their legislature. Gichi-miigwech for joining us. I ask all members to join me in welcoming these guests to their Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

**Ms. C. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join the member opposite in welcoming all of the Indigenous folks that have joined us here from many of our First Nations across the province, but particularly the members from Onion Lake in my constituency.

I had a chance to have a brief conversation with Chief Lewis out in the rotunda earlier and welcomed him to the building. It's too bad he couldn't stay. But I appreciate you taking the time to come here today and watch the proceedings that are going on. And I'm going to be up in your community in the next couple of weeks to make a very special announcement, and I'm really looking forward to that.

So thank you for coming here today and being part of the proceedings, and I ask all members to join me in welcoming Onion Lake in particular to the Legislative Assembly today.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — It's a true honour today to be able to introduce to everyone in this Assembly a great group of grade 12 students, eight grade 12 students from the community of Bruno. And accompanying them is their teacher Lianne Borstmayer. And I'm looking forward to meeting with them after question period. So I ask all members to join me in welcoming these fabulous students to their Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Lemaigre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to join my colleagues and take a moment to welcome you to your legislature. I was talking to some of you outside in the building before we started here, and just reminiscing about some of my engagements in your communities. I see the council member from Waterhen there. And we've had lengthy discussions about some of the topics that we're going to be discussing here, and it's through that dialogue that we build relationship. And sometimes we don't always agree, but I think there are many that we agree on and we can only do that by building on a relationship.

And so I want to ask everybody here to welcome them to your legislature. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in your gallery it's my pleasure to welcome two leaders in sport to their Assembly. I want to welcome Bre Eberle here today, who's marketing and development coordinator with Saskatchewan Special Olympics, and I also want to welcome Dylan Morin who's an athlete. He competes in bocce and bowling and various athletics, and of course he's an incredible advocate on so many other fronts.

I want to thank Special Olympics Saskatchewan, people like Dylan, and certainly Bre and their board and their whole leadership team for all they do to support athletes and champions in our community, Mr. Speaker, some of the most inspiring and dedicated athletes that you'll find, Mr. Speaker. So I ask all members in this Assembly to welcome Bre and Dylan to their Assembly.

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

**Mr. Grewal:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you, through you, it is my pleasure to rise and welcome grade 4 and 5 students from Henry Braun School, sitting with their teacher, Ms. Jennifer Leach, in the west gallery today.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the dedication and services of educators like Ms. Leach who have continuously contributed to our children's well-being, support, and learning. I would also like to welcome parent chaperones Cheryl Aarebrot and Sarah Mullins. I appreciate their ongoing commitment to provide students with an education that will prepare them for a successful future. I hope you enjoy the proceedings today and I look forward to meet you afterwards.

Now I will ask all members to join me in welcoming these wonderful young people to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with my colleague across the aisle and welcome Bre and Dylan to their Legislative Assembly. I think we all just appreciate the hard work and dedication that coaches and volunteers put into making sports so special here in the province. So thank you very much for attending today.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome our Indigenous leaders that are here. I just want to welcome you to your Legislative Assembly and hope you truly get government to hear and listen to your issues and concerns.

While I'm on my feet, I would like to take an opportunity to welcome in your gallery a gentleman that's here — I introduced him last week, but he's in town this week for a SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] convention — Jordan McPhail, a councillor for the town of La Ronge. I just want to welcome you here.

But also Trevor Putz, I want to welcome you here on SUMA business as well, chief financial officer with the town of La Ronge. I just want to wish you all the best, take an opportunity to thank you for your work you do, and thank your wife for the good work she does as a teacher. I've known her for years.

And I just want to welcome you to your Assembly and again wish you all the best. Continue doing the good job that you do and helping our northern people.

With that I will just say, welcome to your Legislative Assembly. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Nerlien:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join with the member from Saskatoon Centre in welcoming the leaders from the First Nations across the province. In particular, I want to welcome the folks from Yellow Quill, which is very close to my home community at Greenwater Lake. And I appreciate their attendance here today and look forward to chatting with them in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I'd also like to make an introduction. In my gallery, there's a young man, a good friend of mine by the name of Dakota Ekman. He and his family operate E-Kay manufacturing. Their manufacturing business is in Perdue, and they produce crop dividers and grain augers and bin sweeps. The company is very innovative. They sell product all over Western Canada and into the Midwest United States, but they also export into Australia.

So please join me and welcome Dakota Ekman to his Legislative Assembly.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. B. McLeod:** — 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 that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to call upon the Government of Canada to immediately suspend the carbon tax across the nation of Canada and acknowledge its significant impact on affordability and inflation in Canada.

The below undersigned are residents of Yorkton. I do so present.

**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 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; and Saskatchewan needs legislation to ensure the provincial duty-to-consult is fulfilled and is carried out with the honour of the Crown; and the Sask Party government has voted against duty-to-consult legislation.

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

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

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

**Mr. Love:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan calling for recognition of the Timber Bay residential school as a provincially run residential school, release the school records, and a formal apology and compensation for the survivors.

Those who signed this petition would like us to know that survivors of the Timber Bay residential school have been denied the same settlements that survivors from other sites received on

the basis that this school was run by the province of Saskatchewan rather than being operated by the federal government. Under the watch of the province of Saskatchewan, approximately 2,000 children attended the school in Timber Bay which operated between 1952 and 1994.

Mr. Speaker, I'm inspired to present this petition by my colleague from Saskatoon Centre as well as a constituent of mine, a young man who snowshoed from his home in Saskatoon Eastview to the site of the Timber Bay school in December of 2021 in frigid cold temperatures to draw awareness to this issue.

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 recognize the Timber Bay school as a provincially run residential school, release the school records to the survivors, offer the students of this school a formal apology, and compensate the survivors.

Today's petition is signed by residents of Air Ronge. 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 adequately fund education.

Mr. Speaker, I was reflecting on what happened here in the House yesterday with one of the parents that came in, Taya, to share her daughter Mayelle's story about the cuts that Mayelle experienced during her elementary school career. Mayelle sadly has passed, but Taya was here to highlight, you know, the reality for her family in the education system, and the underfunding and the cuts that her family has experienced. So I do hope that the Education minister heard Taya, heard her concerns, and acknowledges that those realities are existing in Saskatchewan for many, many families across this province and why we need adequate funding for students in this province.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, 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 provide adequate, sustainable, and predictable operating funds for our 27 public and separate school divisions to ensure that schools, teachers, and other caring professionals are able to meet the needs of every student in Saskatchewan.

The signatories today reside in Kindersley and Regina. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Communities across Canada are preparing for another heavy forest fire season, so I

proudly stand to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan calling for real action on climate change.

The signatories of this petition wish to bring to this legislature's attention that Saskatchewan, like other jurisdictions, continues to experience the challenges brought on by climate change — severe forest and grassland fires, increased flooding and drought; the cost of increased climate change continues to grow through increased crop insurance and provincial disaster assistance program payments; that Saskatchewan is falling behind other jurisdictions on climate change action with no green jobs plan, no plan to tackle GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions, and no incentives for renewables; that Saskatchewan has the second-highest per capita greenhouse gas emissions in Canada; that between 2005 and 2023 the Sask Party government failed to reduce Saskatchewan's total GHG emissions.

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 take real action on climate change.

The signatories of this petition reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to suspend the fuel tax.

The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that 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 the October '23 Angus Reid poll, more than one-third of people in Saskatchewan are struggling with the cost of living; that the Sask Party government could provide immediate cost-of-living relief to Saskatchewan families by suspending the 15-cent-per-litre provincial gas tax; and that the Saskatchewan NDP, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, among others have been calling for immediate tax relief for not only months but years; as well as other jurisdictions such as Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, and Newfoundland have all suspended or reduced their provincial fuel taxes to make life more affordable for residents of their province.

I will read the prayer:

We respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to suspend the collection of provincial fuel tax from gasoline and diesel for a period of six months to help families struggling with the high cost of living.

This petition is signed by the residents of Saskatoon and Holbein. I do so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Riversdale.

### **Philanthropic Foundation Contributes to New Saskatchewan Polytechnic Campus**

**Mr. Friesen:** — Yes, it is another great day in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. Our province is full of amazing people that give back, and last week at Saskatchewan Polytechnic was no different. We had a significant announcement directly affecting the future of our post-secondary education with the official naming of the new campus, Saskatchewan Polytechnic Joseph A. Remai Saskatoon campus.

The Joseph Alfred Remai Family Foundation provided a significant donation of \$25 million to develop this new campus. Mr. Remai's dedication to his craft has not only left a mark on the skyline of our cities but on the future generations of builders. His contributions to the Joseph A. Remai School of Construction at Saskatchewan Polytechnic will assure that students pursuing careers in construction will have the resources and opportunities necessary to thrive. Soon hundreds of students will be getting ready for their first day of class at the newly announced campus.

High-quality learning environments like this will help ensure that our future workforce continues to be responsive to the labour market needs of this province, continuing to meet the goals of Saskatchewan's Growth Plan. That is why our government has committed an investment of up to 200 million for this campus renewal project.

Congratulations to Sask Polytech, and I would like all members to join me and thank Joseph A. Remai and his family for his contributions. Thank you.

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

### **Equality Day Raises Awareness of Fundamental Human Rights**

**Ms. Bowes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize April 17th as Equality Day. Equality Day is celebrated across Canada to mark the implementation of the equality provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms on April 17th, 1985.

The equality provisions were enshrined in our laws to ensure that everyone is entitled to the same fundamental human rights: the right to equality and dignity, and the right to live free from discrimination. Section 15 states that:

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination . . . based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

While we have come a long way since 1985, there is still plenty more work to be done. Canadian women still face tremendous income inequality, earning on average 10 to 20 per cent less than men. These numbers only get worse when talking about BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, people of colour], 2SLGBTQ+ [two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, plus] folks, people with disabilities, and immigrants to Canada.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is something that Canadians are deeply proud of, and I encourage all members of the House to join me in celebrating Equality Day while also committing to address systemic inequality within our society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Recognizing Public Safety Telecommunicators Week**

**Mr. Steele:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great day in Cypress Hills and Saskatchewan. This week has been officially recognized as the Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. From April 14th to the 20th we are celebrating 911 call takers, dispatchers, technicians in Saskatchewan.

When we dial 911, these are the folks who relay the vital information to the firefighters, the ambulance, the law enforcement, and more. Across the province there are telecommunicators that work every day of the week, every hour of the day to help save lives. I would like to take this moment to thank them for their hard work and dedication. Telecommunicators literally connect us to the lifeline.

Mr. Speaker, we rarely get to meet these men and women face to face to thank them for what they do for us and our communities. They do not understand . . . the work in our communities, in our towns, and in our province to help keep us all safe.

I ask all the members to please join me in thanking these men and women, the telecommunicators of our province. Thank you for being at the end of the line when we need you at the most. Thank you.

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

### **Polar Plunge Raises Funds for Special Olympics Saskatchewan**

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to rise today to celebrate the Law Enforcement Torch Run's polar plunge in support of Special Olympics Saskatchewan. With plunge events in Saskatoon and Regina this winter, the polar plunge raised more than \$55,000. Over 170 people raised dollars and took the plunge. I was one of the plungers in Regina, executing a cannonball, and can confirm the water was icy cold.

I want to give a big shout-out and thanks to the Law Enforcement Torch Run for their leadership, and I want to thank the organizing committee: Frank Kovacs of the Regina police and of course also a Regina Pats legend; Joe Tataryn of the Saskatoon police, Bre Eberle with Special Olympics Saskatchewan; and athlete Dylan Morin, who also served as the MC [master of ceremonies] on the diving platform in Regina.

I also want to give a big shout-out and thanks to all my fellow plungers, to all the donors, all the businesses and organizations such as Loraas Disposal, Paradise LeisureScapes, and the Regina Downtown BID [Business Improvement District] and Frost teams that supported the event, hosting it in Victoria Park as part of the winter festival.



I ask all members to join with me in celebrating and thanking all those that made the Law Enforcement Torch Run's polar plunge such a success, and for the invaluable support it offers dedicated and inspiring athletes and champions in our community through Special Olympics Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Melville Golfer Plays Every Course in Saskatchewan**

**Mr. Kaeding:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We in the province of Saskatchewan recognize the vast beauty and wide open spaces we have that support several outdoor recreation activities, including golf, for which the season is apparently here.

Mr. Speaker, I have a constituent from Melville who had the goal of playing every 18-hole grass green golf course in the province of Saskatchewan. This past summer Jake Stolar completed that goal when he played the last of the 103 18-hole golf courses in the province.

When asked about some of the more memorable courses he played, Jake was quick to respond with his hometown Melville course among one of the best. Mr. Speaker, fun fact: Melville Golf and Country Club superintendent is Carson Dennis, the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Canora-Pelly's son, who has been an incredible asset over his many years managing and improving the golf course in Melville.

Mr. Speaker, Jake Stolar is also an organizer of one of Saskatchewan's longest running two-day golf tournaments. Starting in 1974 on a nine-hole golf course, the Melville Autumn Golf Classic began with the intent to help raise money for upkeep and future improvements.

Melville's Golf and Country Club is the second-oldest golf course in Saskatchewan, dating back to the beginning of the last century, and according to Golf Canada is the 43rd-oldest established golf club in the country, tied with Katepwa Beach Golf Club in Fort Qu'Appelle. Melville golf club is home to PGA [Professional Golfers' Association of Canada] professional Chloe Sies, who is also a national team champion.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Jake Stolar on this tremendous feat and his continued work with the Melville Autumn Golf Classic along with the other volunteers.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

### **Yorkton Snowarama Fundraises for Camp Easter Seal**

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Mr. Speaker, on March 2nd I was honoured to attend the 47th Easter Seals Snowarama awards banquet in Yorkton, where I brought greetings on behalf of the Saskatchewan government. The ride was officially cancelled due to snow conditions; however many ventured out on their own to salvage what they could of the snowmobiling season.

This year Snowarama raised \$217,000 for Camp Easter Seal. Approximately 20,000 was raised by campers through Bowlarama, and over 77,000 was raised by the Snowarama desert chapter wintering in Arizona. These funds go towards

helping young people with special abilities access services and programming through SaskAbilities.

The primary programs that Snowarama supports is Camp Easter Seal, summer fun, and adaptive technology services. Camp Easter Seal celebrated 68 seasons of operation this past summer, with the camp providing a safe, fun, and barrier-free experience to all campers as they develop skills and relationships that will last their entire lives.

Summer fun is aimed at fostering community inclusion, encouraging social development, and increasing self-confidence in participants. Adaptive technology services is dedicated to using tech to create opportunities and increase independence for campers.

I ask all members to join me in thanking the Snowarama committee, volunteers, participants, sponsors, and donors for their efforts in making the 47th Snowarama a success, and also to thank and recognize Yorkton-based Legacy Co-op for being a great community member and sponsoring the fuel for the ride annually. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

### **Great Plains College Expands Practical Nursing Program to Kindersley Campus**

**Mr. Francis:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the past few years have underscored the importance of nurses in our province and the crucial roles they play in our communities. We know that a stronger, more responsive health care workforce depends on many factors including high-quality education and effective recruitment and retention. That's why expanding nurse training opportunities has been a key part of broader efforts to meet the province's current and future need for nurses.

Mr. Speaker, in 2023 our government announced the addition of 60 practical nursing seats in post-secondary programs across the province. Great Plains College has announced a new practical nursing program in my home community of Kindersley with another 14 new seats added. Mr. Speaker, adding another location where students can train to become nurses supports our health human resources action plan and will ultimately strengthen our labour force and our economy.

In support of this program, our government has provided \$230,000 in funding through the skills training allocation. Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of attending the announcement and witnessed first-hand the community's excitement. I'm grateful for the positive impact the college has made and will continue to make on students in my community.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Great Plains College for adding a new practical nursing program to its Kindersley campus.

Thank you.

### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

### Fuel Tax and Affordability Measures

**Mr. Love:** — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are struggling with the cost of living, but you wouldn't know it from listening to this tired and out-of-touch government. According to them everything is just fine. But out there, 57 per cent of people are struggling to pay for groceries and we lead the nation in mortgage arrears and 6,000 jobs were lost last month.

With facts like these, it's no wonder that they ditched their slogan, Growth that Works for Everyone. Families need a break when it comes to the cost of living. Why won't the Premier act and cut the fuel tax today?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — When looking at all factors of taxation and costs within government, you have to look at more than just one, and we lead the nation in affordability.

I will just do some comparisons. And I know the members opposite have heard them before, but in Saskatchewan we can earn 20,000 more dollars that are tax free than Manitoba that cut the fuel tax. The fuel tax saves them \$410, but I would imagine it's a lot more than that of income tax on \$20,000.

Let's talk about PST [provincial sales tax]. Saskatchewan's PST is 6 per cent, Manitoba's 7. Ontario, that I know the members opposite have used as an example, is 8. How about PST on utilities, Mr. Speaker? Manitoba has PST on utilities. So does Ontario. Saskatchewan does not. That's savings for Saskatchewan people.

[14:00]

If you talk about PST on fuel over top of the excise tax that they want us to cut, Ontario has PST on fuel. Saskatchewan does not. Let's talk about a health premium. Ontario has a health . . .

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

### Duty-To-Consult Policy

**Mr. Love:** — I guess the Finance minister wants to let the people out there know that they've got it wrong when they're struggling to pay the bills.

Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing on the cost of living and they're failing to ensure that First Nations and Métis people are heard in this province too. Nowhere is that more clear than with the duty-to-consult.

Last year the Sask Party government rolled out new duty-to-consult framework, but they failed to get the consultations right. Mr. Speaker, this failure didn't just impact Indigenous folks; it impacts all of us. We all lose out when First Nations and Métis people don't have their voices heard.

How did the Sask Party fail so badly in consulting Indigenous people on the duty-to-consult?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government

Relations.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, he's partially true. Certainly we did engage First Nations and Métis people on the duty-to-consult. It had been a policy that had been in place for 10 years, and we thought it was time to review it. So invitations were sent to all First Nations, Mr. Speaker, Métis locals, tribal councils, as well as other Indigenous organizations.

Not only did we consult on the First Nations file and the Indigenous file, but we also consulted with municipal associations, both SUMA and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities]. We consulted with industry, whether it was CAPP [Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers] or the Saskatchewan Mining Association. And we got a lot of feedback, Mr. Speaker. Not all engaged, and that's perfectly fine if they chose to. We extended the timeline twice for those groups that wanted to engage but felt the timeline was too short, Mr. Speaker.

We've engaged with a number of them, had feedback, adjusted the policy, enacted it on January 1st, Mr. Speaker. We've trained over 300 government employees on the new policy and look forward to the work that it . . .

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

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. The updated duty-to-consult policy does not uphold inherent and treaty rights, especially the right to practise those rights. Even more alarming, consultation for updating the so-called new policy was not done adequately. Only 31 per cent of First Nation and 38 per cent of Métis locals were engaged. These are failing grades by any measure.

Is this government satisfied with the number? And how does this government hold itself accountable and ensure that it is not breaching its constitutional obligation?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to fulfilling the government's legal duty to consult, which is in the Constitution, Mr. Speaker. How that is conducted is through the duty-to-consult policy framework, which we reviewed over the past year and a half and implemented on January 1st, Mr. Speaker.

And I have already identified the number of groups that we've consulted with. If groups wanted to engage with us, they certainly could. We made phone calls. We went on-reserve if that was the case, Mr. Speaker. We engaged with all, including industry, Mr. Speaker.

Now I know the member opposite may want to talk about legislation put forward. Who did she consult with, with that legislation, Mr. Speaker? Did she consult with the Saskatchewan Mining Association? Did she consult with the Saskatchewan association of petroleum producers? Did she consult with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association or the

Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities? I'd love to hear her answer.

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

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Inherent and treaty rights holders have consistently raised cumulative impacts prior to the new revised policy framework. The fact of the matter is this government has consistently ignored questions on how they are going to address cumulative impacts on traditional territories, even though they say they will revise their policies to stay up to date with current case law.

How is this government working with inherent and treaty rights holders to identify an appropriate baseline for assessing cumulative effects based on their unique history, values, and interests?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, you know, the policy framework had been in place for 10 years, revised as of this past year, year and a half, with the new policy framework going into effect on January 1st.

I think there have been changes made to make the policy more reactive for business and industry certainly but has extended the time for communities to engage in consultation with the stakeholders that they need to. That was what was asked for by communities, Mr. Speaker, and that's what the new framework policy has in place.

Mr. Speaker, but let's look at the amount of industry and development that this province, that all citizens of this province benefit from that has gone through duty-to-consult, Mr. Speaker, whether it's been the mining industry in the North or the forest industry that helps all people in the North get jobs and pursue their lives that they want, Mr. Speaker. I think the policy framework has served this province fairly well, and I think the new policy framework will even be better.

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

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Mr. Speaker, Indigenous people in Saskatchewan, the inherent and treaty rights holders, continue to demand action on meaningful duty-to-consult. Let me spell that out. Meaningful duty-to-consult is a two-way dialogue during the consultation process. Indigenous people have not had any meaningful two-way dialogue when it comes to duty-to-consult with this tired and out-of-touch government.

When will this government stop giving lip service to reconciliation and how much they respect inherent and treaty rights holders, and have a real two-way dialogue on the duty-to-consult process?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would

certainly say that the government's track record is not giving lip service to reconciliation. Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, that's why we reviewed the policy to get input from all stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, Indigenous communities as well as industry. The member opposite has failed to answer the question. And I think I know what the answer is and that's why she's not answering.

She has consulted with one or two organizations, failed to answer any consultation issues with the Saskatchewan Mining Association, the Saskatchewan association of petroleum producers. I know she didn't consult with SARM. Did she consult with SUMA, Mr. Speaker? She's standing there lecturing this government on what we should do to consult, and she has hardly consulted with anybody on her own policy, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — This government continues to say different things in different rooms. They say, in face-to-face meetings with inherent and treaty rights holders, that they will accommodate the local requests. Then as soon as they leave that community they do the exact opposite. First Nation and Métis people are fed up with being ignored by this tired and out-of-touch government.

When will this government stop treating inherent and treaty rights holders who raise valid concerns with utter disrespect and disregard?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I think we should kind of maybe even cut to the chase a little bit further as to what this really means for the member opposite. It really means resource revenue sharing, is what that member is offering, Mr. Speaker, and is certainly in favour of. She has stood with First Nations that want to go towards resource revenue sharing.

Now talk about saying one thing in one room and something else in another. Their leaders have been on both sides of that issue. I believe Dwain Lingenfelter campaigned on resource revenue sharing. This member opposite is in favour of resource revenue sharing.

Where is the member and the Leader of the Opposition and that party when it comes to resource revenue sharing? Because we believe that all people share in the resources this province has.

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

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, we do know for a matter of fact that policy has no teeth. Legislation does. Mr. Speaker, this province has fallen behind other jurisdictions on duty-to-consult. Others like BC [British Columbia] have enacted legislation to implement UNDRIP [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples]. The government's new consultation policy doesn't even address this important declaration, nor does it refer to the principles contained within it.

How does the minister intend to work with Indigenous people without referencing any of the principles within UNDRIP?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I find it very interesting that the member opposite is talking about legislation around consultation, lecturing us on who we should consult with, Mr. Speaker, and how we should consult. We have engaged with as many First Nations as would engage with us, Mr. Speaker, a number of Métis locals, a number of tribal councils.

But she's talking about engagement and she's talking about consultation and she's failed to consult with industry, Mr. Speaker, whether it's the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, whether it is the Saskatchewan Mining Association, whether it's SUMA — who is somewhere in the gallery today — or SARM, Mr. Speaker. Isn't that part of the consultation process if you're going to put forward legislation? I sure think it should be.

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

#### Retainer Paid to Private Law Firm

**Ms. Conway:** — What a disappointing answer in the presence of many inherent and treaty rights holders, Mr. Speaker. When the government fails to get these important constitutional issues right, we all end up paying for it. We see that with the duty-to-consult, and we see that with the ongoing litigation on the government's pronoun policy.

But when it comes to the public dollars that are flowing out to a private law firm on that case, the Sask Party is refusing to disclose the amount. Our Justice critic asked about that number at committee on Tuesday, and the Minister for Justice refused to answer. So I'll ask again. How much public money is being spent on private lawyers fighting this pronoun case in the courts?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's our position that parental rights are worth defending. Is it theirs? They've gone pretty quiet on that issue, Mr. Speaker. The only time that that side ever feigns concern for taxpayers is on this, which of course we share.

Mr. Speaker, information on all legal fees paid to private firms is provided every single year through private accounts, Mr. Speaker. The Ministry of Justice regularly retains private counsel, a practice that certainly predates this government, on files that require additional capacity or specialization.

Mr. Speaker, in this case the Ministry of Justice and a private law firm are representing the Ministry of Education, and they are representing them in a case that was brought against the government. We are defendants in active legislation, Mr. Speaker. Solicitor-client privilege goes to the heart of any legal case and ensures that strategic and tactical choices to defend that case remain confidential. The retainer is a part of that and

subject to that privilege. I don't intend to violate that, Mister . . .

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Right, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people deserve basic answers and accountability for public dollars being spent. When the Sask Party hired private lawyers to fight the carbon tax case, it cost taxpayers half a million dollars. And the Justice minister at the time, to his credit, was crystal clear about what costs were being downloaded to taxpayers.

But things have sure changed with this Sask Party, Mr. Speaker. That minister is on his way out, and the new Minister of Justice won't disclose these basic costs, hiding behind solicitor-client privilege.

Why won't the minister stop with the games and release the basic information to Saskatchewan people?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — There are important distinctions here, very important distinctions in the sense that in that case we brought forward the reference, Mr. Speaker. We brought forward the reference. In this case we are defendants in active litigation in a case that was brought against us. And, Mr. Speaker, we will use all tools necessary to protect parental rights, including an appeal all the way to the Supreme Court if necessary, and we have been very clear about that, Mr. Speaker.

But retainers with private firms — which is a practice they did, we did, Mr. Speaker — that remains part of confidential client-solicitor privilege while the case is ongoing. It is an important fundamental right, Mr. Speaker. And once that case is resolved, then all of that information will of course come out, as it does every year in Public Accounts every single year to private firms, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it sure is rich to get a lecture in solicitor-client privilege from an Attorney General who's never practised law. Mr. Speaker, this is a pattern from the least transparent and accountable government in Saskatchewan history. They think they don't have to answer to anyone, that the rules don't apply to them. They run roughshod over the rights of Indigenous people and vulnerable kids. And when those matters end up in court, they think it's okay to withhold the costs from taxpayers.

How can the minister justify withholding this information? How much has been paid out to this private law firm so far?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Information regarding all legal fees paid to private firms is provided through Public Accounts every year.

And, Mr. Speaker, for a member who never fails to remind us about her broad and deep legal expertise, if anyone should recognize the importance of solicitor-client privilege and how that matters in terms of a case such as this where we are active defendants in this case, Mr. Speaker, she should.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is a case which we will fight all the way. This is a case which is of importance to this government, which matters to us. Parental rights matter in this province. It matters across the country. They know it. And that's why they've gone silent on this issue, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Emergency Hotel Stays Paid by Social Services

**Ms. Conway:** — Well I thank the minister for the compliment, but it doesn't change the fact that this tired and out-of-touch government hates transparency. They won't reveal the costs of defending their unconstitutional pronoun policy in the courts, something her predecessor had no issue doing.

And it took months to get basic information about the Sunrise and Thriftlodge motels. I wrote to the minister about that back in February, asking for six numbers: how much was paid out to the Thriftlodge this year and each of the last five years? We didn't get an answer for months, Mr. Speaker. We asked about this in early February.

When did the minister's office actually have this information?

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Mr. Speaker, the member got the information. We went over it the other night in estimates, Mr. Speaker. And there it was confirmed what I've said, from officials that I had no knowledge of the situation, Mr. Speaker. In fact, yesterday Jeff Redekop, executive director of income assistance delivery in the Ministry of Social Services, categorically denied the opposition's allegations on hotel use.

Mr. Speaker, I'm quoting:

Front-line staff are looking for what options are available for clients who are in need. The ministry has generally no knowledge of who owns the hotel and has never been instructed by government to use a certain hotel.

He also added, "It's about the needs of the clients." Mr. Speaker, I remind the House the only source of these accusations is the NDP. The only people who we're looking to benefit are the most vulnerable people who need a roof over their heads in emergency situations, Mr. Speaker.

On this side we trust our front-line workers, Mr. Speaker. Why doesn't the NDP?

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Didn't touch the question, Mr. Speaker. Again, on what day did the minister's officials forward those numbers

to his office with the answers to these basic questions? Did it really take two months, or did the minister just not like what that information exposed?

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Mr. Speaker, once again, Mr. Redekop, who is the executive director of income assistance delivery within the Ministry of Social Services, denied the allegations from the NDP. I'm going to quote once again. I don't think the member heard it:

Front-line staff are looking for options that are available for clients who are in need. The ministry has generally no knowledge of who owns the hotel and has never been instructed by the government to use a certain hotel.

He also added, "It's about the needs of the clients."

And, Mr. Speaker, of course government agrees with that. Mr. Speaker, does the NDP agree with that? What part of that, what I quoted from Mr. Redekop, does that member not understand?

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Here again, we see a government that will take credit for anything but is responsible for nothing. Mr. Speaker, getting answers from this tired and out-of-touch government is like pulling teeth. It shouldn't have to be this way. It shouldn't have to take months for basic answers, unless of course the Sask Party just didn't like what these numbers showed.

Perhaps it's hard to blame them, given the numbers we got on Monday: 1,300 paid out to those two hotels before the 2020 election; three-quarters of a million after. How does the minister explain that explosion of payments to the Thriftlodge and the Sunrise motels, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Mr. Speaker, I know the member is handed notes from NDP central command on what to read, Mr. Speaker, but I've directly answered these questions.

So I'll read once again into the record, Mr. Speaker. Jeff Redekop, executive director of income assistance delivery, Ministry of Social Services, categorically denied any of the opposition allegations on hotel use. He said in the media yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I'm quoting:

Front-line staff are looking for options that are available for clients who are in need. The ministry has generally no knowledge of who owns the hotel and has never been instructed by the government to use a certain hotel.

He also added, "It's about the needs of the client." Mr. Speaker, do the members opposite not believe in dedicated civil servants?

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll also remind

everyone that after the Sunrise Motel scandal broke, that minister also said at that time there were no other hotels connected to Sask Party MLAs. That turned out not to be the case. So forgive me while I continue to ask these questions.

Thirteen hundred before the election; three-quarters of a million after the member connected to these two hotels was elected. To two hotels, both of which inflated their rates by 100 per cent, Mr. Speaker, only for Social Services clients, only for the most vulnerable.

These numbers are even worse than anything we could have imagined. Thirteen hundred to three-quarters of a million. Does the Social Services minister really expect us to believe it's all just a coincidence?

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Mr. Speaker, if that member doesn't believe me, will she believe an independent member of the valued public service, Jeff Redekop, executive director, income assistance? He said yesterday in the media, and I'm quoting again:

Front-line staff are looking for what options are available for clients who are in need. The ministry has generally no knowledge of who owns the hotel and has never been instructed by government to use a certain hotel.

He also added, Mr. Speaker, "It's about the needs of the client." We agree, Mr. Speaker, with Mr. Redekop, all the people that work each and every day on the front lines, those in mobile crisis, Salvation Army who choose what hotels people might need when there's no place in emergency shelters, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Overdose Deaths and Treatment for Addictions

**Mr. Teed:** — If these are the best answers that this government can offer, I think it is time for change.

Last year our province set a record for overdose deaths. This year the Sask Party announced cuts to the supports that keep people alive. In Alberta similar policies have led to a 25 per cent increase in the rate of overdose deaths.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, treatment is important. But you can't check into a treatment centre if you have died from an overdose. When will we see an evidence-based plan from this government to make sure that 2024 won't be another record-setting year for overdose deaths in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. T. McLeod:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And if the member opposite wants to compare strategies to other provinces, I would encourage him to look just a little bit further to British Columbia and see how their strategy there is working, Mr. Speaker.

In this province, Mr. Speaker, we are focused on treatment and recovery because we know that we can save lives, heal families, and strengthen communities, Mr. Speaker, if we can help individuals find treatment and walk a path to recovery. And that's why we are more than doubling the number of treatment spaces available in our communities across Saskatchewan. We are making it easier for people to access those treatment spaces, and we are wrapping supports around them through recovery oriented systems of care, Mr. Speaker, that address on a holistic basis the individual needs of each person battling an addiction so that we can ensure that they can walk the healthy path to recovery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Just like to remind the Minister of Social Services, since you brought this up — and opposition, you've done this in the past — but just take this into account. I wish to remind members that you have the privilege of free speech. You should be cautious of the comments directed to those who cannot respond to any allegations made by a member on this floor. Your reference was to members of the civil service. So just keep that in mind.

Why is the member on his feet?

**Mr. Steele:** — Permission to make an introduction.

**The Speaker:** — The member has asked leave to make an introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Steele:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to, in the west gallery, introduce some community leaders from the Southwest. We have the mayor and three of the councillors from the town of Shaunavon, Saskatchewan. Welcome to your legislature.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just very briefly, on behalf of the official opposition, I want to welcome the mayor and the officials, the councillors from Shaunavon that have joined us here today. That's an awesome town in the Southwest — Ranch House Meats, Harvest Eatery, and so much more. We welcome these very fine folks to their Assembly.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill No. 616 — *The Duty to Consult Act*

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

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 616, *The Duty to Consult Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member that Bill No. 616 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure

of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — At the next sitting of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

## 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 Coronation Park.

**Mr. Burki:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour and pleasure to be on my feet for the debate on Bill No. 156, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2024*.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's really amazing that we are giving checks and balances and track and process on tobacco on those kinds of things. As a father, as a teacher, I know that how it is important for our future faces and for our communities. I will say that the licences for each and every of those kinds of tobacco, whether it is pipes and whether it is any other thing that can be harmful for our young generation, definitely I will say that we should have to be keeping track of that, proper licensing, proper regulation to make sure that our communities, our children are being saved.

So I've been working with a lot of schools, especially in high schools, the students, and I know that these things are really harmful. Young people are not really very mature. They are taking everything, or most of the things, to make sure that they can try how it looks, how it feels, so by having pressure of their peers. So they can be exposed to those kinds of things. So it's always important that we have to restrict the availability or abundance of those kinds of situations for our young people.

So we make sure that any person that is supplying with it — they are wholesalers or they are retail sellers — make sure that they should have a proper licence as well, and how much quantity they acquire, how much quantity they are selling per month so we can know about that, what quantity is going to the young people, to the street, to their places.

And at the top of that, instead of making this licensing, we have to make it a little bit more strict. The more easy, the more places we will have, the more vulnerability we have, the more things will be impacting our young children as well.

So with that, regards those that put it over here in our bill, that those they are . . . licences have been expired, their items and their supply, their stock will be seized up, which is great. We have to make sure that every person or every business that they are in this job, they make sure they have to keep updated their licence as well.

And again, make sure that they should have to quantify how much quantity is being marked for them to keep it and how much they have to be allowed for that. And what kind? What are they selling? So this kind of data will give us a really good picture to assess analytically that how much is consuming. And for the long run, for bylaws or for making any regulations, those will be very helpful so we can have this statistic available in our system.

So we make sure we have to be not ignoring one of the things that is becoming really very common among young people, pipes and nicotine pouches as well, which is also one of the harmful for the young people.

So these are the things that I have to put into that. So it's a good regulation. Anything that is protecting or safeguarding our young children, definitely we will have to be . . . I personally will have to support that.

With this I will have to be putting this one to our critic for this area of tobacco, and this they have. So they will be talking in detail about that. So with that I will adjourn debate on Bill 156, *The Tobacco 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.

#### 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 Coronation Park.

**Mr. Burki:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's again my pleasure to be part of debate for Bill 157, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2024*. In this bill, when I was looking and reading to the bill, it's always good that we are encouraging our small businesses. In this bill it mentioned that they will have to be maintaining the same 1 per cent tax on the small businesses for one extra year, which is great. And we all know that the small businesses are the backbone of our economy. In our province we have to encourage those businesses, because whenever they making money out of their business, it will stay in our province. It will stay in our community. And that is the grassroot level that we are investing in our communities.

Big businesses, they are making big business but the money is not staying in the province. So we have to focus on that one and we have to be clients of the local businesses, purchase and buy from them. And I heard that during COVID time, many small businesses, they take a loan from federal. Now they are having a very hard time to return that money back. So in this situation, if we are looking into this option that we are giving relief, to pay for one year 1 per cent instead of they're paying more, that would be a great thing, that we are encouraging young businesses or new businesses or small businesses.

I have a few businesses in my community as well in Regina Coronation Park that I went with them, chat with them. They were having the same issues because they take a loan; they can't pay the loan. And they are just bargaining with the federal government to make sure that they can pay in instalments, which is another option as well.

I will say personally that we should not be going for one year. We have to go for two years. The reason is that they are not being paid that money that they'd taken from federal. So if we can keep their life a little bit easier, affordable, they will stay longer and that will be the best option for our economy to grow. About the dividend as well, credits, that is given over here as well. That, we'll say, should we keep for 1 per cent as well. So these are the basic things that we are encouraging.

Those businesses that we are giving rebate or we are minimizing their tax bracket, especially with COVID over, they're still having to push their business up to the mark. So with that I will leave this bill to our critic member. So he will be talking and will be having a lot of questions on that. With this, I adjourn the debate on 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.

### 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 Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on Bill 158. Just looking at it initially, it looks like the credit, those that apply for this credit, the legislation that's being amended, changed, it's giving an individual one more year, from going from seven years to eight years to apply for the credit.

As I was looking through some of the notes, I know our colleague that will be in committee and will be asking questions and getting clarification on this. It doesn't look like it's been . . . and I don't know how many, Mr. Speaker, have utilized this credit. I don't know if there's anybody. I think we need to find out exactly how many people have utilized this tax credit.

And you know, that's always interesting because you don't know who was consulted. And if nobody utilized it who are they, you know, to understand that? And I know there's going to be some work in committee to find out exactly who's utilizing it, you know. We know we have a lot of talent in our province — we know that — as far as patents, you know, to patent and then the patent box as the legislation talks about and applying for that credit. But I'm hoping that our critic will be able to find out exactly, you know, how many people and companies are utilizing this legislation and this tax credit. That'll be important.

Other than that, you know, time. I guess one thing I was thinking is maybe there's time to look at it for later down . . . Maybe there'll be a new government that will change the legislation. You never know what the good people of our province say on this. So maybe there'll be changes in the next little while. So maybe that year gives somebody a chance to say when there's something new coming out for Saskatchewan people in this legislation.

So really at this point I don't think I have much more to say on this, and I'm prepared to move adjournment on Bill 158, Mr. Speaker.

**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 University.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Privileged to enter a couple comments into the record on Bill No. 159, *The Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to give a special shout-out and thanks to my colleague from Regina Elphinstone on this one.

Mr. Speaker, as has been articulated by some of the previous adjourned debates on this, the bill appears to ensure that if a corporation isn't paying its taxes, the directors at that time are held liable, together with the corporation, for repayment. And of course, Mr. Speaker, you know, you should pay your bills and you should pay them promptly whether those are bills, things that are outstanding, or accountability for corporations who aren't paying their taxes, Mr. Speaker.

But this is a government who sure loves to talk about taxes. But something we haven't heard an awful lot about recently is that terrible, no-good, very bad idea that is the Saskatchewan revenue agency, Mr. Speaker. Maybe it was a trial balloon, but it did seem to take a very important, a very prominent place in this government's agenda just last year. And thankfully we continue to hear nothing about it, Mr. Speaker, a revenue agency that



would ensure small businesses, corporations have to duplicate their efforts, duplicate their fees, and create an entirely unnecessary bureaucracy here in Saskatchewan to duplicate what's already being done, Mr. Speaker, at a time when it is next to impossible for people to hire CPAs [chartered professional accountant], whether they be for great offices like the Provincial Auditor here, Revenue Canada, or right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. So again, like I said, pleased to speaking about this bill and not a bill to introduce a Sask revenue agency, which again is a no-good, very bad idea, Mr. Speaker.

A question that has been put on the record in regards to this bill is why the fine for not filing is lower than the fine for filing incorrectly. Of course this seems . . . I'm not an expert, Mr. Speaker, but this seems to incentivize not filing. And again, it is curious that people can't FOI [freedom of information] their audit reports like they would be able to FOI their medical reports.

And those auditors sure are up to good work, Mr. Speaker. I can't turn around without talking to somebody who's been audited by the province these days, which is an interesting process, Mr. Speaker. I hesitate to say it's never happened to me; maybe I'm just asking for trouble. But as I learned, the auditors will actually come right to your house, which was such a surprise to me. A huge amount of work obviously for smaller corporations and small businesses. Important of course to ensure compliance. But just a massive amount of work undertaken by those skilled professionals to ensure that the books are in order, Mr. Speaker, and the care and dedication that those folks show and the small business owners in complying with that is so important, Mr. Speaker. And I wish we had a government that gave as much care and attention to ensuring that their books were in order, Mr. Speaker.

So with that I think I've gone on long enough, so I'll move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 159, *The Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act, 2024*.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 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 Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join on Bill No. 160, *The Immigration Services Act*. I think it's very important, you know, to get it right, to make sure foreign workers are protected. You know, many of them are vulnerable and you want to make sure, you know, the process that we use and legislation that provides those that will get a licence to work, to try to bring in foreign workers, we want to make sure, you know, those foreign workers, vulnerable workers, are protected as much as possible you can protect them.

And I explained this. I know our critic will be going through committee and asking some questions and going through the process on licensing and the timeline and stuff like that, how long will it take, and what kind of changes will happen to make sure our foreign workers are protected.

We want to make sure we have, you know, our foreign workers coming here, but at the end of the day too we want to make sure . . . And I think government should look at this and it's an opportunity to look at our foreign workers, but the retention rates. Are we retaining those workers and keeping them in the province? So when industry, you know, and you put the good dollars in to bringing them in and working with them and finding ways to find good-paying jobs for them, that you make sure that we retain those workers to stay in the province and not lose a lot of them. So hopefully when we get into committee we can ask, and maybe government's going to bring in some legislation that will show their commitment to making sure our foreign workers do stay in the province and don't take off to the big centres after they're here.

So I think initially our critic will have an opportunity in committee to ask some questions, verify, you know, making sure who was consulted, bringing this information forward. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I don't have a lot of questions. I know our member, the critic, will have those questions and get the answers. And he'll do some work consulting and finding out who exactly have government talked to, and is this the right legislation, and will this do what needs to protect foreign workers.

And let's hope they've got it right, and if not, hopefully in committee they can bring forward some information and some more, maybe, changes that need to be made to make sure foreign workers are protected.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to move adjournment on Bill 160.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — In order to facilitate the work of committee this afternoon and this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — This House now stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:45.]

# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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